



Experience of Family Caregivers for Older Patients with Delirium: A Qualitative Study



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INTRODUCTION

Delirium is “an acute decline in attention and cognition”, that is common in older people admitted to hospitals for acute care or after having an operation.

Delirium can affect 23 % of older people in hospital settings. Patients with delirium are more likely to have poor functional and cognitive recovery.

The impact of delirium may extend beyond the patient; caring for people with delirium at home can be difficult as it is associated with stress for carers.

Although family members and carers can have a significant role in the management of delirium, research is scarce on the experiences and needs of carers for patients with delirium internationally and in the UK.

AIMS

This study aims to explore the needs and experiences of family carers for a person with delirium and offer suggestions to support them.

METHODS

We conducted semi-structured interviews with family carers of persons with delirium.

We used the Informal Caregiving Integrative Model (ICIM), Theory of Caring, and existing literature to inform our analysis.

We identified patterns in the data about the experiences of carers and identified four themes.

CONCLUSIONS

Viable solutions to assist family carers include:

- more support for the carer in formulating care plans for people with delirium,
- development of support groups for family carers of people with delirium,
- and a case worker.

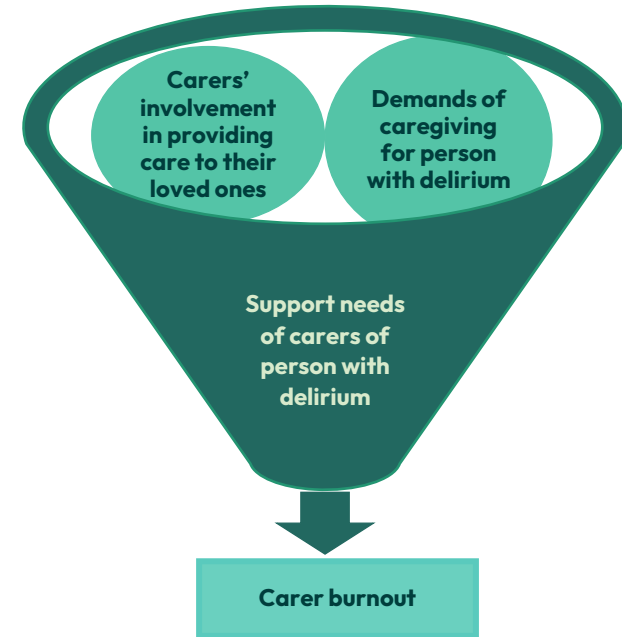
These solutions may help to decrease re-hospitalisation and admission to care homes.

Future research should focus on approaches to better support carers of people with delirium, and to shift the care plan from person-centred into person and family-centred approach.

RESULTS

Fourteen family carers were interviewed.

Figure 1: Themes developed using abductive thematic analysis



Carers perceived that there is a lack of sufficient support for them, which made the caregiving role more challenging and leading to carer burnout.

We identified the needs of carers for people with delirium including: education on delirium, reassurance, information on care pathways and support from formal carers to take breaks.

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