

Preparation and Struggle of Two Generations for Future Care: A Study of Intergenerational Care Planning among Mainland Immigrant Ageing Families in Hong Kong

Authors : Xue Bai, Ranran He, Chang Liu

Abstract : Care planning before the onset of intensive care needs can benefit older adults' psychological well-being and increases families' ability to manage caregiving crises and cope with care transitions. Effective care planning requires collaborative 'team-work' in families. However, future care planning has not been substantially examined in intergenerational or family contexts, let alone among immigrant families who have to face particular challenges in parental caregiving. From a family systems perspective, this study intends to explore the extent, processes, and contents of intergenerational care planning of Mainland immigrant ageing families in Hong Kong and to examine the intergenerational congruence and discrepancies in the care planning process. Adopting a qualitative research design, semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with 17 adult child-older parent pairs and another 33 adult children. In total, 50 adult children who migrated to Hong Kong after the age of 18 with more than three years' work experience in Hong Kong had at least one parent aged over 55 years old who was not a Hong Kong resident and considered his/herself as the primary caregiver of the parent were recruited. Seventeen ageing parents of the recruited adult children were invited for dyadic interviews. Scarcity of caregiving resources in the context of cross-border migration, intergenerational discrepancies in care planning stages, both generations' struggle and ambivalence toward filial care, intergenerational transmission of care values, and facilitating role of accumulated family capital in care preparation were primary themes concluded from participants' narratives. Compared with ageing parents, immigrant adult children generally displayed lower levels of care planning. Although with a strong awareness of parents' future care needs, few adult children were found engaged in concrete planning activities. This is largely due to their uncertainties toward future life and career, huge work and living pressure, the relatively good health status of their parents, and restrictions of public welfare policies in the receiving society. By contrast, children's cross-border migration encouraged ageing parents to have early and clear preparation for future care. Ageing parents mostly expressed low filial care expectations when realizing the scarcity of family caregiving resources in the cross-border context. Even though they prefer in-person support from children, most of them prepare themselves for independent ageing to prioritize the next generation's needs or choose to utilize paid services, welfare systems, friend networks, or extended family networks in their sending society. Adult children were frequently found caught in the dilemma of desiring to provide high quality and in-person support for their parents but lacking sufficient resources. Notably, a salient pattern of intergenerational transmission in terms of family and care values and ideal care arrangement emerged from intergenerational care preparation. Moreover, the positive role of accumulated family capital generated by a reunion in care preparation and joint decision-making were also identified. The findings of the current study will enhance professionals' and service providers' awareness of intergenerational care planning in cross-border migration contexts, inform services to alleviate unpreparedness for elderly care and intergenerational discrepancies concerning care arrangements and broaden family services to encompass intergenerational care planning interventions. Acknowledgment: This study is supported by a General Research Grant from the Research Grants Council of the HKSAR, China (Project Number: 15603818).

Keywords : intergenerational care planning, mainland immigrants in Hong Kong, migrant family, older adults

Conference Title : ICHAA 2021 : International Conference on Healthy and Active Aging

Conference Location : Singapore, Singapore

Conference Dates : March 29-30, 2021