

An Investigation into the Decision-Making Process of Choosing Long-Term Care Services in Taiwan

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Abstract : Background: Family members usually take responsibility for taking care of their elderly relatives, especially parents. Caring for a patient with chronic diseases is a stressful experience, which makes carers suffer physical and mental health stress, difficulties maintaining family relationships and issues in participating in the labor market, which may lower their quality of life (QoL). The issue of providing care to relatives with chronic illness has been widely explored in Taiwan, but most studies focus on the need for full-time caregivers. Objective: The main goal of this study was to examine the topic of working carers involved in the decision-making process of LTC services and to explore what affects working carers considering when they choose the care services for their disabled, elderly relatives. Method: A total of 7 working caregivers were enrolled in this study. A face-to-face and semi-structured in-depth qualitative interview study were conducted to explore the caregivers' perspectives. Results: Working carers have a positive experience of using LTC service because it allows them to kill two birds with one stone, continue employment, and care for an elderly disabled relative. However, working carers have still been struggling to find friendly community-based LTC services. There were no longer available community services that could be used with the illness condition of patients getting worse. As such, patients have to be cared for at home, which might increase the caregiver burden of carers. Conclusion: Working family caregivers suffer from heavy physical and psychological burdens as they not only have to maintain their employment but care for elderly disabled relatives; however, the current support provided is insufficient. The design of services should consider working carers' employment situation and need rather than the only caring situation of patients at home.

Keywords : family caregiver, Long-term care, work-life balance, decision-making

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