

Ethnographic Exploration of Elderly Residents' Perceptions and Utilization of Health Care to Improve Their Quality of Life

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Abstract : The increase in proportion of older people in Malaysia has led to a significant growth of health care demands. The aim of this study is to explore how perceived health care needs influence on quality of life among elderly Malay residents who reside in a Malaysian residential home. This study employed a method known as ethnographic research from May 2011 to January 2012. Four data collection strategies were selected as the main data-collecting tools including participant observation, field notes, in-depth interviews, and review of related documents. The nine knowledgeable participants for the present study were selected using the purposive sampling method. Two themes were identified: (1) Medical concerns: Feeling secure, lack of information, inadequate medical staff; and (2) Health promotion: Body condition, health education, physiotherapy and rehabilitation. These results could evoke the attention of policy-makers and care providers to better meet elderly residents' health care needs.

Keywords : ethnographic study, health care needs, Malay elderly people, Malaysia, Quality of life, Residential home

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