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## Like one of the Family?

Relationships Between Migrant Live-in Carers and Older Care Recipients in Israel

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### 2014 ERA TRAVEL AWARD

**Host institution:** Herczeg Institute on Aging at Tel Aviv University, Israel

**Mentor -** Professor Jiska Cohen-Mansfield

**Project -** Relationships between frail older people and their migrant live-in care workers.

Investigators: Jiska Cohen-Mansfield, Esther Iecovich, Hava Golander

Interviews with: 116 interviews migrant in-home caregivers, 73 older people who were receiving this kind of care.

#### What I did:

Observed interviews with older people.

Conducted interviews in English with migrant live in carers

Analysed quantitative and qualitative data

Wrote a journal article

### Project Background

**Trends**

- Care provided by migrant live-in carers increasing in Western countries
- Global societal trends - declining birthrates & changing family dynamics

**Relationships between migrant live-in carers and frail older people**

- Quality of carer-care recipient relationships has implications for quality of care
- Studies have been conducted in UK, Canada, Israel and Taiwan
- Relationships range from close and meaningful to distrustful and problematic.
- Quality of relationships affected by cultural differences and communication difficulties.

### Home care services in Israel

- Two-thirds provided by live-out Israeli home care workers
- One-third provided by live-in migrant carers
- The most impaired people are eligible for subsidized live-in home care

#### Issues

- Most migrant live-in carers come to Israel without formal training
- Existing training programs for these workers are very limited

### About the study

**Research questions:**

How do migrant live-in carers and older people:

- rate their interpersonal relationships?
- describe their relationships with each other?

**Quantitative data**

Older persons' and carers' ratings of:

- Feeling close to each other, getting along well with each other, understanding each other, and quality of the relationship

**Qualitative data**

What are the good things in the relationship?

How could your relationship be improved?

**Data analysis**

Descriptive statistics, Chi-square tests, Spearman correlation coefficients

Qualitative content analysis and peer review to check credibility

### Question 1: Rating of interpersonal relationships?

Quantitative data revealed:

- Both groups perceived very good interpersonal relationships with each other.
  - 64.3% of carers and 50.0% of older people perceived the quality of the relationship to be 'very good' or 'excellent'.
  - Most participants reported 'getting on well with each other' and 'feeling close to the other person to a 'great' or 'very great' extent'
- Congruency of perceptions of the relationship between the 55 dyads was moderately high.
- 'Understanding each other' was positively associated with perceptions of the quality of the relationship.

### Qualitative analysis: Describing care relationships

Three fundamental similarities in the two groups:

- Caring about each other
- Having a good connection
- Providing good care
  - Meeting the older person's care needs (Carers)
  - Meeting my care needs (Older people)

### Theme 1: Caring about each other

Described by both groups as feelings of:

- Being cared about
- Being looked after
- Emotional closeness

The study findings raised issues around the:

- Pull towards informality in co-resident client-carer relationships
- Blurring of role boundaries
- Potential conflict in relationships being simultaneously 'quasi-familial and contractual in nature'

### Theme 2: Having a good connection

Similar perceptions:

- Understanding each other as 'people'
- Being treated with respect
- Good communication

Divergent perspective on social interaction:

- Older people – look for carers to provide good company through intelligent and interesting conversation.
- Carers – describe social interaction as part of their caring role.

### Theme 3: Providing good care

Carers described:

- Meeting the care recipient's basic care needs
- Keeping frail older people active and alert.

Older people spoke of:

- Tasks being done in accordance with their particular needs and preferences.

### Summary of findings

**Quantitative data:** Both groups perceived very good interpersonal relationships with each other.

**Qualitative data:**

- Carers focused on providing good care
- Older people focused on carer competency
- Both groups - personal relationships and good communication important
- Issues relating to asymmetry in the relationship and blurring of role boundaries were identified

### Implications for practice

Strategies for achieving better outcomes:

- Shifting the focus of care from a **task-oriented** to a **relationship-centred** approach

Thank you