Abstract

Objective: To explore differences in disease awareness in participants of a psychoeducational group designed for Latin American caregivers of people with dementia. Method: We assessed participants of a group developed at an outpatient unit for Alzheimer’s disease. Interpretative phenomenological analysis was used to analyze differences in the caregivers’ reports. Results and Discussion: The participants, mostly spouses and daughters, presented moderate caregiver burden and different levels of awareness (aware, partially aware, or unaware). Disease awareness and the development of coping strategies were influenced by familism, religiosity, and duty. Becoming a caregiver was considered positive in some cases, due to religious convictions and beliefs related to the importance of caregiving. Caregiver unawareness may reflect an attempt to maintain integrity of the patient’s identity. Conclusions: Our data allow some comparisons across cultures, which may be valuable in assessing the influence of different psychosocial environments on the knowledge about dementia.

Keywords

Caregiver, dementia, awareness, intervention, qualitative study.