

Exploring the Relationship Between the Family Caregiver and Wound Care Practices: A Systematic Review

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Background and Significance

- In the US, 53 million people act as family caregivers for loved ones (NAC & AARP, 2020)
- 58% of the FCGs reported performing medical/nursing tasks in the home (NAC & AARP, 2020)
- In the Home Alone Revisited Study, 36.8% of FCGs reported executing wound care at home (Reinhard et al., 2019)
- There is a need to improve FCG preparation and the discharge (D/C) planning process (Reinhard et al., 2019)

Purpose

- To investigate evidence concerning wound care practices and their relationship to the FCG

Methods

- Searched PubMed, CINAHL, ERIC, and Scopus
- Search terms: “Caregivers” AND “Wound care”, OR “Wounds and Injuries”
- Inclusion criteria: English language, FCG > 18 y/o, no limitations to care recipient age, and a focus on FCG experiences/practices with wound care

Discussion/Conclusions

- FCGs report wound care as challenging which precipitates stress
- Ineffective preparation for wound care can lead to poor FCG self confidence which can impact wound healing

Research/Practice Implications

- Need for more studies using various designs to investigate FCGs’ experiences with wound care
- Need for individualizing of D/C planning processes

Findings

- 8 studies met the review’s inclusion criteria
- FCG wound care preparation differed across studies
 - Use of smartphone applications improves communication between health care providers (HCPs) and FCGs after transition of care to the home setting
 - Collaborative FCG group training or FCG demos of dressing changes to HCPs can help prepare the FCG for wound care
- FCG wound care knowledge
 - FCG wound care knowledge strengthened by repeated training sessions performed by the HCP
- FCG wound care practices/wound care healing
 - Transition of wound care to FCG r/t geographic proximity of home to facility, FCG willingness, and perceived dressing change complexity
 - FCG group training sessions increased wound care skills
 - Access to the HCP through smartphone apps enhanced FCG wound care skills, decreased the number of outpatient visits, and decreased wound healing times
- Psychological impact of caregiving
 - FCG stress r/t financial burden
 - FCG stress can affect family functioning
 - Caregiving leads to disruptions in FCGs’ social lives
 - Higher wound severity level leads to increased FCG sense of burden
 - Higher FCG self-efficacy with wound care is associated with a decrease in FCG burden



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