

Personal attention is essential: interrelationships in the triad of residents, families and nurses

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Background

In order to strengthen the **relational essence of quality of life and care** and diminish constraining regulations, care organisation Topaz participates in a national movement 'Radical renewal nursing home care: from regulations to relations', a national endeavour organised by the Dutch Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport and national client organisation LOC.

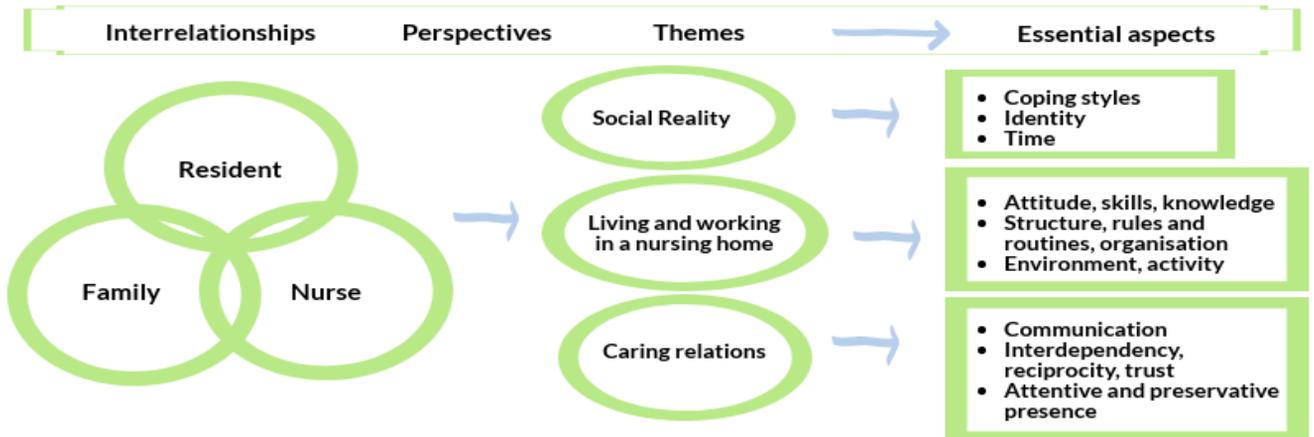
Aim

To explore the **most essential aspects of interrelationships** in the nursing home, from the **perspectives of residents, families and nurses**. Furthermore, it aimed to reveal the most important **preconditions** for the establishment of these valuable interrelationships. This knowledge contributes to improvements in the quality of daily life and care.



Methods

This **qualitative study** focused on two out of three encompassing relationships: between residents and nurses; between nurses and families. **Semi-structured interviews** were conducted with residents, nurses and families; **focus groups** were done with families and 55 hours of mostly non-participant **observations** were done.



Results

In general, the results indicated a remarkable consensus on several aspects between the different categories of participants. **Dignity and respect for personal wishes, needs and preferences** were essential according to all participants. Everyone expressed the importance of **genuine personal attention**, which was even more important to residents than nurses realized. Both residents and families applied several **coping styles**, which was not always recognized by nurses. The **attitude, knowledge and skills** of the nurses were emphasized as essential by all participants. Families and nurses both had various well intended **interpretations** about the other but rarely discussed or verified these. **Several barriers** for attentive care were experienced in structures, regulations, time and administration.

Conclusions

- Personal contact is essential, in both passive and active presence
- Attitude, skills and knowledge of the nurses are crucial
- Relationship and communication between families and nurses could be improved
- A more conducive environment should be accomplished to facilitate nurses