

Thesis, Dissertations and Term Paper Summaries

The illness experience according to stroke survivors

A experiência da enfermidade na perspectiva de pessoas que sobreviveram ao acidente vascular cerebral

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ABSTRACT

Backgrounds and objectives: Considering the high worldwide prevalence of stroke and the Brazilian scenario, the negative impact on the quality of life of stroke survivors and their family members, poor social and structural support from the health care network for the treatment and rehabilitation process, the aim of this study was to analyze the feelings and meanings of the illness experience from the perspective of individuals who survived a stroke. **Methods:** This is a qualitative and interpretative case study according to the theoretical and methodological assumptions of modern hermeneutics, which was approved by the Ethics Committee of Pontifícia Universidade Católica de Goiás under protocol number 305.390. The study sample comprised eight adult and elderly individuals, treated at a general hospital in the southwest of the state of Bahia, from January 2011 to December 2012. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews carried out in households and interpretative analysis was performed following the steps of data reduction, organization, identification of units of meaning, construction of thematic nuclei and result interpretation. **Results:** The experience of illness was understood as an event between life and death, disability, loss of autonomy, incapacity to work. Social support from family and religion was essential to cope with changes in everyday life and the participants mentioned difficulties during the rehabilitation process after hospital discharge. **Conclusion:** The lack of the rehabilitation program is a clear dichotomy of public policies, with a poor-quality service being identified, contributing to the dehumanization of health care. Participants and their family members were deprived of a health care network for the treatment and continuity of home care, establishing a disarticulation of the organizational structure of support networks and their lack of resources to meet the health care demands of patients with chronic diseases, especially in the countryside, where human and technological resources are scarce. These results suggest the need to improve the strategies of educational interventions and multidisciplinary care.

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