

The relationship between care worker burnout and unit-care system at the special nursing homes for the elderly

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1. Introduction: The purpose of this study is to make clear the relationship between care worker burnout and unit-care system at the special nursing homes for the elderly and to investigate the way to reduce such burnout. Unit-care lifestyle can give residents a lot of homemade atmospheres to help them feel comfortable in everyday life. But nowadays unit-care system is difficult to maintain because of fiscal shortages and the lack of trained care workers for nursing facilities. Therefore, this study investigates the way to maintain unit-care system while minimizing burnout among care workers from two points of views. The first examines the fall in burnout rate after care worker relocation to group units from the traditional care system. The second evaluates the effect of advanced technique training on the provision of care.

2. Research Process : The first research in 2002 is to examine the effects of changes in care environment at special nursing homes for the elderly, when preexisting loop corridor-type facilities are converted into group living units. Effects were measured by a questionnaire on burnout (using The Maslach Burnout Inventory) and stress coping to 22 persons. Findings suggest that unit care was effective in decreasing stress among care workers when clear procedures for changing to unit-care were provided. Psychological support for care worker involved in the transition was also important. The second research is to study how to maintain a good working environment that minimizes psychological stress on care worker at nursing homes for the elderly between 2002 and 2004 to 22 persons. Our analysis shows that

burnout rates increased significantly about one and half years after the arrangement. So, to maintain a good working environment, we think that employers must proactively prevent care worker at unit-cares from being isolated, while enhancing communication among other members of unit-care. The third research in 2015 is to compare the rates of burnout among care workers before and after moving to group living units in 2015 to 215 persons. The questionnaire revealed 250 workers who replied that they suffered a little from burnout. There was little difference between the two types of nursing facilities in this respect. These results suggest that stress can be just as dangerous at unit-cares as at the traditional nursing facilities. The fourth research conducted in 2017-2018 to 217 persons is to examine the difference in care worker burnout in group living units, before and after training in the way to conduct ideal care at group living units focusing on environmental adjustment and person-centered care. The results showed that the depersonalization score (within the burnout score) was significantly higher in the " normal unit-care implementation group" than in the "unit-care training designated group". However, both groups had shown very low scores in personal sense of accomplishment. So, we think the result suggested training is effective.

3. Conclusion: These studies had two main results. The first is that the burnout rate decreased when caregivers relocated to group units from the traditional care system. Burnout rates decreased for about one and half years after relocation, but then rose. The second result is that it is important to continue the advanced training for caregivers working at unit-care to prevent renewed increase in care worker's burnout.