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Biography of the author (= presenting author)

Katrin Gillis has twelve years of clinical expertise as neuroscience nurse in Belgium and the Netherlands. As lecturer at the University College she is involved in many courses on neuroscience nursing. Further, she is involved in the development of postgraduate courses on neuroscience nursing and in different nursing research projects, more specifically in elderly care in nursing homes. She is also editor of the book 'Brein & zorg' (2017).

Katrin combines her function as lecturer with a position of researcher at vzw Curando and as research assistant at Ghent University, Centre for Nursing and Midwifery.

She is also active as boardmember of the Belgian Association of Neuroscience Nurses and the European Association for Neuroscience Nurses.

Presentation type

Oral presentation

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Abstract title

Implementation of a person-centered approach on team level in residents with dementia and symptoms of agitation or aggression.

Abstract text

Eighty percent of residents with dementia of nursing homes display difficult behaviour, often an active expression of unfulfilled needs. This results in numerous ways of difficult behaviour, among which agitation and aggression are the more frequent ones. Professional caregivers experience agitation and aggression as very stressful.

Two researches investigated a non-pharmacological approach of dealing with difficult behaviour of residents with dementia, including the entire staff of a department.

The Neuro Pyschiatric Inventory determined whether or not residents displayed difficult behaviour. The first research (2016) offered residents reminiscence sessions for 23 weeks. However, the previously proven positive effects of reminiscence were not confirmed. The other research (2017) only included residents with agitation and/or aggression. A few steps were added to the design, such as an analysis of the behaviour and the underlying needs.

Depending on that need, the residents received aromatic hand massages, music therapy or an individual and meaningful activity over a period of fourteen days.

Interestingly, the degree of difficult behaviour, agitation and aggression decreased significantly this time – even though emotions such as fear became more visible.

In spite of professionals in residential care centres becoming more aware of the importance of individual care, the implementation on team level proves to be difficult and dependent on various factors on which we will focus during the presentation. This research proves that a mere behavioural approach is not effective enough. Discovering the underlying need of residents and addressing that need appropriately is an important step toward more individual care.