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An Exploration of Volition: Caregiver's Perceptions of Persons with Dementia

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ABSTRACT:

Objective: The purpose of this study was to understand what formal caregivers know about the volition of elders with moderate dementia.

Method: A qualitative approach was used at an assisted living facility. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with formal caregivers to gain their perceptions of residents' volition, or motivation for occupation. Resident participants were assessed using the Volitional Questionnaire (VQ).

Results: Caregiver interviews and resident VQ's were analyzed using van Manen's phenomenological approach (van Manen, 1990) to examine their congruence with regard to the volitional abilities of residents. Thematic analysis yielded two broad themes: 1) Caregivers possess varying layers of insight regarding the volitional abilities of the elders with dementia, and 2) Caregivers develop a script regarding the volitional abilities of the elder with dementia.

Conclusion: Caregivers possess knowledge about volitional abilities of elders with dementia. Further research is needed to understand how these perceptions affect their care giving behaviors.

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