

'Effectiveness of Validation'

A qualitative study on observed modes of action and their potential for possible outcomes to measure the effectiveness of Naomi Feil's validation method.

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ABSTRACT

Background: Due to the consequences of demographic aging, the sectors of health care and nursing are increasingly being confronted with associated diseases, including dementia. Dementia is a relatively new challenge for nursing care, thus novel approaches to caregiving are applied. In this context, the validation method of Naomi Feil, which should enable people with dementia to regain dignity, feelings of self-worth and reduce stress, is increasingly gaining importance. Although validation is considered to have a high potential for clinical practice, the impact on the empirical level has not yet been proven. One reason for this may be the equivocal conception of the effective parameters.

Aim: This thesis investigates possible changes in the behavior of dementia patients by applying Naomi Feil's validation method. The research question that arises in this context is: 'What kind of change in the behavior of dementia patients can caregivers determine by using the validation method?'. The aim of the study is to provide a basis for a theory of change, through this perspective and thus to generate explicit outcome parameters related to the effectiveness of the validation method.

Method: The research question was investigated in cooperation with the validation experts from two different nursing home institutions, located in Vienna and Lower Austria. The data collection took place in three focus groups and the data was consequently evaluated by the qualitative method of 'mapping'.

Results: Four dimensions related to the observed changes could be identified: posture, expression, (physical) contact and body language. The impact can be determined at two time points, during and after the application of the validation method and is mostly perceived on a non-verbal level. According to validation experts, these changes result in better 'ability to contact' with dementia patients.

Outlook: With these findings, a first essential step was taken to explain the effect mechanism of the validation method. However, further perspectives on the subject, for example through structured observations and a focus on possible effects on the users themselves, are necessary to present the findings sufficiently. Thus, the validation method can be described as a complex intervention in accordance with a program theory and its impact can be evaluated in a theory-based manner.

Keywords: dementia, validation, effectiveness, focus group

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