

Abstract

The Current Status of Family Caregiving for Older Adults and Strategies to Help Families through Community Care from Gender Perspective

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The purpose of this research was to identify the care dynamics between family caregivers and older adult care recipients and how such care relationships are built upon based on each party's

perceptions about care responsibility and care right, and to understand how the care combination is made based on the care relationships in families.

As care policies for older adults in Korea focus on guaranteeing the continuum of care and aging in place, recently the Ministry of Health and Welfare introduced the concept of community care and began pilot projects in several local councils. However, strategies to implement community care at the local level tended to lack a gender perspective resulting in gender blindness of various programs provided under the name of community care.

The research findings indicate that without family care for older adults it is not possible to accomplish the continuum of care and aging in place under the current provision of long-term care services for older in Korea that are fairly restricted. The family caregivers experience asymmetrical concentration of care burden in families, and there were imbalances between men and women in terms of the amount of care they give and receive. For example, male caregivers tend to have stronger sense of obligation to family caregiving while female caregivers tend to spend more time and energy for actual care delivery. Also, male care recipients tend to feel more comfortable receiving family care than female care recipients who constantly worry about caregivers' burden. And when female caregivers care for male care recipients, the stress and conflict level was the highest.

Thus, the government needs to intervene in family care process and assist family caregivers by providing formal opportunities to learn and counsel about the relational autonomy, death & dying, and loss & grief etc through family centers in communities. Respite services, and family care breaks and leaves are also to be provided more widely. And the vertical continuum of care and

horizontal continuum of care need to be expanded to decrease the level of family's burden to care for older adults. The vertical continuum of care could be expanded by providing unilateral and concentrated services of regular assessment and referrals so that each older adult can receive the care services purely based on their care needs. The horizontal continuum of care could be expanded by government's providing more diverse care services to the broader range of older adults.

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