Background

Because of the changes in the healthcare, the role of the informal caregiver in taking care of relatives becomes even more important. Professionals have an important role in identifying, preventing, and reducing overload of informal caregivers. Therefore the clinical guideline 'Informal Care' was developed.

Clinical practice guidelines aim to support clinical decision-making. However, they are often regarded as too extensive and limited applicable to the individual client. Strategies such as reflective practice are needed to improve guideline use in clinical practice.

Aim(s)

This study aims to develop a reflection method to improve adherence to the Dutch guideline "Informal Care" for community nurses and certified nursing assistants.

Methods

A participatory design-based study was conducted, in which a design group, including community nurses, certified nursing assistants and a patient representative, and four test groups of nurses were formed to develop a reflection method that matches needs and preferences of its end-users. The design and test group meetings were video recorded, and analyzed and discussed iteratively with the design and test groups to adapt and refine the reflection method.

Results

Critical features for the reflection method were identified, and a final reflection method was developed. This reflection method includes two 2-hour meetings with up to six participants and a coach as a process facilitator. Participants appreciated the game element in the reflection method. It is an accessible way to work with specific cases about informal care and to come to actions. Participants were enthusiastic about discussing care for informal caregivers together based on the questions derived from the guideline. It appeared that participants had very limited knowledge about guidelines in general and also concerning the 'Informal Care' guideline.

Discussion

This study found that participants had little to no knowledge of guidelines in general and its use in daily practice in community care. A lot of research has been done about the knowledge that healthcare professionals have about specific guidelines they work with. However, no studies were found that address basic knowledge of guidelines in general.

The participatory design-based approach allowed the reflection method to be developed with the end-users, ensuring a match with their nursing practice (2). The reflection method is a result of a co-creation process

between researchers and end-users. A participatory design-based design produces results for that specific context and therefore it is difficult to generalize to another context. However, critical features were established, which are expected to be transferable to other contexts.

Implications and future perspectives

A reflection method for community nurses and certified nursing assistants for the use of the Guideline 'Informal care' was developed, which supported them to identify, prevent, and reduce overload of informal caregivers. To properly implement the reflection method within home care organizations, it is important to thoroughly examine the barriers and facilitators, and identify matching implementation strategies.

References

1. Perrotta, C., Featherstone, G., Aston, H., Houghton, E. (2013). *Game-based Learning: Latest Evidence and Future Directions* Slough: NFER

2. Wang, F., & Hannafin, M. J. (2005). Design-based research and technology-enhanced learning environments. *Educational Technology Research and Development*, *53*(4), 5-23. https://doi.org/10.1007/bf02504682