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POSTER PRESENTATION

Caring for residents with dementia during a COVID-19 outbreak in a long-term care home

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Abstract

Background: Although there have been considerable public concerns about the impact of COVID-19 on residents living in long-term care homes, much less attention has focused on lessons learned from staff experiences about caring for people with dementia during outbreaks. The outbreaks added significant additional stress to the nursing workforce, which has historically experienced high turnover, chronic staffing shortages, and increased burnout in long-term care settings. We conducted focus groups (n=20) and individual interviews (n=10) to investigate critical challenges, experiences, and support needed for frontline staff in a long-term care home in British Columbia, Canada. A total of 30 staff in multiple disciplines participated in the study. They included Registered Nurses, Licenced Practical Nurses, care staff, recreational staff, and unit clerks. We applied qualitative thematic analysis and identified four themes: (a) I am proud, (b) we become stronger, (c) I am nervous (d) the vaccine helps. The frontline staff's voices provided a detailed description of their emotional experiences, creative coping strategies and positive stories about caring for the most vulnerable population in extraordinary situations. In our poster, lessons learned and implications for future research and practice will be explored and discussed.