A Narrative Inquiry On Culturally Competent Dementia Care

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Research Question: How does a culture hold dementia care?
Sub-question: What can we in the U.S. learn from other cultures about dementia care to enhance this care for all?

The Purpose of This Research: To explore possibilities of culturally competent dementia care in the U.S. by examining and contrasting the perception of aging and dementia, and unique values/concepts related to health and dementia care in Japanese culture.
Why Culturally Competent Dementia Care Now?

- An estimated 5.5 million Americans from a variety of different ages are living with Alzheimer's disease (2017 Alzheimer's Disease Facts and Figures, 2017).

- In the 2010 Census, it was revealed that the population had grown related to racial demographics between 2000 and 2010: Black or African-Americans with a 12.3% increase, Asians with 43.3% increase, while Whites with only 5.7% increase (U. S. Census Bureau, 2010).

- As this diverse population in the U.S. continues to grow in both numbers and age, so will the population of people who develop dementia. Arguably, based on these statistics, more individuals and families will need culturally competent care in the 21st century and beyond.
Methodology, Participants and Procedure

Method

• Narrative Research: conducted interviews with Japanese caregivers
• Narratives will provide a way to enter into the lived experience of caregivers, their feelings and attitudes towards the care they give, and what they consider is most important about their caregiving. Narratives have the capacity to reflect the caregivers' beliefs and values and how they are culturally compelled to give care.

Participants/Procedure

• Japanese caregivers: Four professional and four family caregivers from Japanese culture, who cared for persons with dementia, were interviewed.
• Digitally recorded each interview and transcribed the recordings word by word.
Data Analysis

• Coding and Interpretation Process

Using Values Coding to illuminate the participants' values, attitudes, and beliefs that relate to their perspectives and views of looking at the world of dementia care in their own culture.

Once having coded the transcriptions, after reviewing and adjusting the coded items, I categorized them and linked the categories for connections among all the interviews to generate themes or concepts of dementia care.
Findings: Emerged Themes/Concepts

Family Caregivers
1. Responsibility attached to the role
2. Stoicism
3. Humility/Empathy
4. Connectedness through a community/neighborhood/a circle of friends
5. Home-Oriented
6. Determination/Endurance
7. Patience/Tenderness/Acceptance

Professional Caregivers
1. Humanity/Empathy
2. A Sense of Normalcy
3. Psychological/Mental Responsibility
Discussion

• These emerged themes/concepts seem to be in accordance with the concept of interdependent self of Japanese as opposed to Westerners’ independent construal of the self (Doi, 1973, Heine et al., 1999, Markus & Kitayama, 1991)

• When working with a person with dementia and his/her family from a different culture, it may be helpful and important to understand cultural differences and commonalities of the way in which people relate to each other, and to dementia and its care.
For the Future

• My ambitions and aspirations are to keep accumulating narratives from different cultures in terms of dementia care, so that my work will eventually be a collection of cultural anthropological data.

• I hope that my research has the potential and means to support/cultivate cultural competency in the care system by eliciting narratives from groups/individuals in diverse cultures within the U.S., who directly experience these social and clinical challenges and dilemmas.