

A STUDY OF THE BASIC TRAITS THAT AN OLDER ADULT EXPECTS FROM A PROFESSIONAL CARE GIVER

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This study is based on the traits of a professional care giver that are expected by the older adults in Sri Lanka. The study has been conducted in Western Province. Although the concept of professional care giving is not a popular concept in Sri Lanka comparing to Western and European countries, there are over 30,000 care givers provide their services to older adults in nursing homes or hospitals, elderly homes or to the elders who live with their own family. Some care givers are recruited by the government, some are recruited by care giving agencies while a small number of care givers work independently. The aim of the study was to understand the basic traits that an older adult expects from a professional caregiver. 115 respondents (between 64–82 years) participated for the survey and semi-structured questionnaire was used as the tool of data collection. Majority of the sample (64%) was female adults. The best traits that elderly identified as every professional caregiver should have are empathy, attentiveness, compassion, trustworthiness, friendliness, cheerfulness and efficiency. Apart from that elders recognised sympathy, flexibility, selflessness and positivity as other traits which are important for a professional care giver. The adults did not consider about the knowledge and the level professionalism of the care givers, but always they expected to have someone as the care giver who can feel their discomfort and disabilities associated with aging process. Traits of the care giver plays a major role towards the quality of the service they offer to the elderly. Social and psychological aspects of care giving should be more focused in relevant trainings in order to educate the care giver on social and physiological needs of the adults. It should be emphasised the fact that addressing social and physiological needs are equally important as addressing physical needs of the elderly person. The policy makers, trainers and the practitioners in the care giving arena will be benefited by the findings of this research and it will contribute towards constructing a quality care giving system in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: *Care giving, Care giver, Older adult, Traits*