

研究論文

在真實與虛擬之間相互取暖： 社會支持對失智症病人照顧者的意義

盧鴻毅、劉珈瑄、曹汶龍

摘要

本研究於2014年7月至2015年底之間，針對8位失智症病人照顧者的社會支持團體成員進行訪談，以瞭解面對面與線上的社會支持團體提供他們哪些支持？以及這些支持對其產生的意義為何？結果發現，多半照顧者在病人罹病前，對失智症一無所知，透過參與照顧者社會支持團體活動，才漸漸獲得失智症相關資訊與照顧技巧；社會支持團體則提供照顧者心靈喘息的港口，讓他們可以彼此分享照顧心情、互吐苦水。本研究也同時觀察為失智症病人照顧者的社會支持團體所成立的Line群組，發現Line這個社交媒體讓病人的照顧者自由分享家中失智症病人的生活情況、參與照顧者社會支持團體的感想，甚至是照顧失智症病人時遇到的各種疑難雜症等，該群組討論主題並無限制，成員可隨時拋出議題，互相取暖、激勵彼此，這顯示「即時性的社會支持」對照顧者而言，需求性相當高。本研究發現，當面對面支持團體與Line群組雙管齊下，可提供失智症病人的照顧者即時且多元的社會支持。

關鍵詞：失智症、社會支持、照顧者

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Research Article

“Getting Warm with Each Other” in Real and Virtual Communities: The Meaning of Social Support to Caregivers with a Family Member Suffering from Dementia

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Abstract

In this study, conducted from July 2014 to the end of 2015, we interviewed eight caregivers of patients with dementia in a social support group. We investigated what kinds of social supports are offered in both face-to-face and virtual social support groups, and the meaning of such supports to caregivers. The findings show that these caregivers initially do not know much about dementia, but as a result of participating in the support group, they come to learn more about the condition and how to care for those suffering from it. The social support groups become a venue for the caregivers to rest from their duties and share their feelings, especially their negative ones, about their situation.

In this study, we also analyzed the discussion content of the online social

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support group, Line APP. We found it to be a platform where dementia patients' caregivers could share accounts of the patients' lives, share their own feelings about participating in social support groups, and discuss the challenges of being a caregiver. On Line APP, the members could hold their discussions in real time, and they reported that they got "warm feelings" and inspiration from each other. The findings thus show that caregivers deeply appreciate this real-time social support, and that it is vital to them.

The results suggest that both face-to-face and virtual social supports, which provide real-time and diversified social support, are both important to caregivers of patients with dementia.

Keywords: dementia, social support, caregiver

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