Review of the Decision-making of Living in Nursing Home

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Abstract. Nursing home is very common in western countries, and there have been many studies. Due to the influence of traditional Confucian culture, this is still a new thing in China. However, with the development of the Times, more and more Chinese people choose to stay in the nursing home. This paper tried to map the existing studies of nursing home and further locate the possible research gaps. Through reviewing the related studies, we summarized the main research themes. Then, provide suggestions for future research.

Introduction

The decision theory originates from the field of management. It has formed a school of decision theory, which represented by Herbert Simon, the Nobel laureate in economics [1, 2]. The famous decision theory mainly includes the objective rational decision theory, the continuous limited comparison decision theory, the rational organizational decision theory, and the irrational decision theory. Then there was a great deal of research in the field of marketing to study consumers’ purchasing decision. Consumer’s purchasing decision refers to the process of evaluating the attributes of a product, brand or service carefully and selecting and purchasing products that can meet a particular need [3]. The main purchasing decision modes include S-O-R Mode, Kotler’s Behavior Selection Mode, Nicosia Model, Engel Mode, and Howard—Sheth Model, etc. [4]. In some ways, choosing to live in a nursing home is a purchasing decision. Some scholars have studied the decision-making of living in a nursing home. For example, Gorger (1994) believes that the decision of institutional resettlement, which is a family process, should not be unitary [5]. Sandberg, Lundh and Nolan (2002) used grounded theory to interview the roles of children play when their parents choose to live in the nursing home. However, most studies about living in the nursing home are focus on the field of Social Security, lack of research from other perspectives. This paper aims to review the present studies of the decision-making of living in the nursing home. Find the research gap and give suggestions for future research.

Method

This paper mainly use three ways to search for the studies of the decision-making of living in the nursing home. First, search two key words namely Decision-making and Nursing home in Google Scholar, both in Chinese and English. Second, search the same two key words in the well-known Chinese database, such as How Net and WanFang. Through these two methods, a large number of relevant literatures were download. Third, track important studies referred by papers found in the two previous ways.

Research Theme

Influence Factors. Kao & Stuifbergen (1999) interviewed nine caregivers, and found that factors influencing the elderly to choose nursing home include: 1) the relationship between the elderly and the family; 2) characteristics of the elderly; 3) family economic situation, (4) welfare assistance of the nursing home [6]. The decision-making is influenced by family communication and power level, when the caregiver feels that have reached the limits of their endurance; they will begin to assess their
right, influence, and ability to debate for the their limit patience [7]. As for caregivers, whether to accept the idea of putting the elderly in the nursing home is one of the key factors, if the caregiver has a negative attitude, or threatens the image of the individual filial piety, s/he tends not to use care services [8]. Xiang(2014) studied the aged over 65 of a nursing home in Wuhan, and found that the main factors are: the nursing home is more professional, unwilling to influence their children's daily routine, family and friends’ recommendation, sufficient economic support, do not want to be disturbed by children[9]. Zhu(2015) Studied on the willingness of the elderly in hollow village, found that men, poorer physical condition, higher income, less children and lower life satisfaction, their intention of living in the nursing home is higher. While women, better health and stronger traditional pension values tend to choose home care. The ideal old-age pension for rural elders is "live at home and be taken care of by spouses and children"[10]. Based on the study of China Longitudinal Aging Social Survey (CLASS) data, Yuan (2016) found that the factors influencing the elderly's willingness to nursing home are gender, occupation, number of children, subjective well-being, life satisfaction and community service facilities [11].

From the existing research, we find the main factors that affect the elderly living in the nursing home mainly include: 1) characteristics of the elderly, such as gender, occupation, physical condition, attitude, economic conditions; 2) family structure and interaction, such as number of children and their attitude, family relationships; 3) facilities of aging services, whether there are appropriate nursing home; and 4) social environment, including social concepts, social policies, neighbor’s choice, etc.

**Decision-making process.** Kao & Stuifbergen (1999) suggested that decision-making process is gradual and dynamic, there is no clear stage, and include three main stages, respectively is: a) breaking harmony, (realizing duties, realizing imbalance due to long-term care, realizing burdens); 2) rebuilding harmony, (setting priorities, setting boundaries, coping efforts); 3) evolution [6]. Penrod & Dellasega (2001) summed up the family experience with 14 respondents, and found that the core concept of the process was "isolate pressure". This process involves six stages: 1) crisis, breaking the status quo; 2) assess the needs and resources and feel inadequate; 3) experience conflict; 4) obtain temporary relief after the settlement; 5) find an appropriate nursing home; and 6) reposition the caregiver’s role and create a new interactive mode [12]. Davies & Nolan (2003) found that there are three different stages: making the best choice, completing the move and improving post-stay life [13]. Huang (2009) found that the family follow the "process of seeking approval and harmony". There are four stages, include the need to detect changes, the evaluation of care resources, family consultation, and development and consolidation of recognition strategies. These four elements affect and interact with each other as a dynamic cycle [14]. After interviewed 30 caregivers of the elderly with dementia in Taiwan, Chang and Schneider (2010) found that there were four stages in the resettlement decision: 1) initiation of decision; 2) assessment of decision; 3) confirm of decision; and 4) evaluation of final decision [15]. Kwon & Tae (2012) did a research about the South Korean caregivers’, and found that decision-making process mainly has four stages: 1) realizing a dead end; 2) seeking a way out; 3) accepting the inevitable decision; and 4) reorienting to change [16].

From previous studies, we can find that the decision-making process of choosing nursing home is dynamic and continuous. The process mainly include: 1) objective reality produces the need; 2) making decision after comprehensive evaluation; 3) finding an appropriate nursing home to implement decision; and 4) evaluating and adapting to new mode of care.

**Summary**

After reviewed the previous studies on the decision-making of choosing nursing home, we find two research topics, respectively is the influence factors and the decision-making process. In the eastern cultural context, special emphasis is placed on the importance of family interaction. What’s more, most studies are qualitative. For the future research, we can compare the researches in different cultural background. We should study this issue from more perspectives.
References


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