

Elderly people and old age homes: an application of andersen & newman's model

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An increasing number of elderly people will spend the last years of their life in sheltered facilities (e.g., old age nursing homes) because of the extending of life-expectancy in the industrialised countries and the evolution of family structure.

Andersen & Newman model underlines the importance of Predisposing Factors (age, gender, school attendance, nationality), Need Factors (disability, dementia, loss of self-independence) and Enabling Factors (social support, family support) in determining the causes for hospitalisation. The aim of this qualitative survey is to verify the validity of the model, particularly considering attitude as one of the Predisposing Factors.

We carried out a non-directive interview to 32 elderly people (age 79.06 ± 8.97 ; M = 16 and F = 16) divided in two groups; the first was made of individuals living at home, while the second group was made of individuals living in residential old age nursing homes.

The analysis of interview contents showed some theme areas: old age nursing home characteristics; reasons for hospitalisation; family relationships; disease; image of institutionalised elderly people. The two groups gave different answers to those areas. Results showed the validity of Andersen & Newman model related to the attitude's component among the Predisposing Factors applied to the studied sample.

A negative attitude correlated to the fact of living in residential facilities emerged. Differences were found between individuals who live in such facilities (deprived of personal choice) and those who live at home and think of residential facilities as an ultimate possibility that they might eventually choose. Further quantitative research to test Andersen & Newman model is needed to gather more exhaustive information about health care systems for the elderly.

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