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"My tools for care"

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Poster Abstract Submission

Alzheimer Scotland Annual Conference 2019

Title: *“My Tools for Care”*: A Self-administered Online Intervention to Support Family Carers of Older Persons Living with Dementia

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Background: Considering the important role of family carers of persons living with some form of dementia, it is critically important to support carers. Current examples of interventions that have been evaluated to support family carers (largely based on stress and burden theories) include training and education sessions or coping and stress reduction programs led by healthcare professionals. These interventions have shown limited reduction of burden for family carers. Given the journey family carers undertake, transition theory provides an appropriate and alternative guide to understand the needs and experience of family carers of persons living with some form of dementia.

Aim of the research: Based on transition theory, the aim of our research was to develop an online toolkit to support family carers of persons with some form of dementia and other chronic conditions living in the community. The resulting toolkit, known as the *My Tools for Care*, is an online self-administered intervention that provides resources and education to support family carers.

Approach: A mixed methods pragmatic randomized control trial was conducted with 185 participants (from Alberta and Ontario Canada) randomly assigned to a treatment or control group. *My Tools for Care* was evaluated for its impact on carer self-efficacy, hope, and quality of life.

Outcome: *My Tools for Care* was perceived to help participants to reflect on: their caregiving journey, how far they've come, and what supports they have available to them. Participants appreciated that the tool provided information and education for the carer and some noted that the tool helped to reflect on the importance of self-care.

Conclusions: *My Tools for Care* is an innovative online intervention that is cost-effective, flexible to the needs of the carer, and offers resources and educational support for family carers of persons living with some form of dementia and other chronic conditions.

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