Sharing Treasure: Qualitative Insights into How Care Home Managers Mobilise Knowledge

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BACKGROUND & METHOD

The South West of England has a growing older adult population and a high number of residential and nursing care homes. Home managers play a central role in shaping culture and implementing changes to improve care and the wellbeing of people living in care homes. How they share knowledge and use research evidence to do this is an under-researched area.

To understand and learn how managers obtain, share and use knowledge to improve everyday care we did semi-structured interviews with 19 managers from 15 homes. We explored their role and how they access, use and apply knowledge to benefit people living in care homes. Our interpretations of the data drew on knowledge mobilisation theories and concepts from the sociology and psychology of emotions.

Time in role	3 years or less	8	3-7 years	3	7 years or more	8
Gender	Women	16	Men	3		
Ownership of home	Not for profit	5	Private	9	State-owned	1
Size of home	Small (< 20 beds)	3	Medium (21 - 40 beds)	6	Large (> 40 beds)	6
Location	Urban	11	Rural	4		

CENTRAL THEMES

Tacit knowledge, practical wisdom, scientific knowledge, organised emotional care, emotional intelligence



Accessing and applying different knowledges

"Once you're seen as qualified enough it's hard to get more training. I feel let down by that, there's always something new to learn'

"I like knowing everybody, I think knowing everyone is what makes the home special"

"When you can show knowledge - to staff, to doctors - you're not just making up nonsense, then it makes all the difference. People listen"

"To be a strong manager you have to be willing to research and set aside time to read. You have to keep up otherwise you'll come crashing down"

Networking: how and with whom?

"I've learned from the owners. If I didn't have that I'd be lost - there's nothing to say how you do a manager's job"

"I have a consultant and felt able to really expand and try all sorts of different things"

"Going back to the point about working in isolation and care homes not engaging with one another. I think it's a dangerous move"

"I get emails, a whole load of shit"

"Central office and managers meetings, so we're all there, we're all sharing information" Emotional work / emotional knowledge

"I don't expect to be doing this much more than another year. I just don't think my sanity or wellbeing can keep going"

"You can't be a manager if you don't like working with people. If you don't feel that passion or enjoy it then you're not going to pass that philosophy on to staff"

"Staff definitely need emotional support as well as giving support to the people who live here"

"It's vitally important you have happy staff to have a happy home environment"

REFLECTIONS

- · How can these insights help in the design of training and development opportunities for managers?
- · How can we effectively communicate and share knowledge / best practices in such a varied sector?
 - How can we support managers with the emotional aspects of their work?



