



Exploring the Perceptions of Community-Dwelling Frail Older Adults and Their Informal Caregivers on “Informal Caregiver-Induced Forced Immobility”

Parvaneh Ghahremaninasab¹, Haidar Nadrian^{2,*}, Nafiseh Ghassab-Abdollahi³, Parvin Sarbakhsh⁴, Fatemeh Zarghami⁶

¹Student Research Committee, Tabriz University of Medical Sciences, Tabriz, Iran

²Social Determinants of Health Research Center, Tabriz University of Medical Sciences, Tabriz, Iran

³Department of Geriatric Health, Faculty of Health Sciences, Tabriz University of Medical Sciences, Tabriz, Iran

⁴Department of Statistics and Epidemiology, School of Public Health, Tabriz University of Medical Sciences, Tabriz, Iran

⁶University of Limerick, Limerick, Ireland

Background: Family caregivers should focus on maintaining independence when assisting older adults with mobility. This may, however, bring about a counterproductive effect, namely Informal Caregiver-induced Forced Immobility (ICFI). This study explored the perceptions and experiences of older adults and their informal caregivers regarding ICFI.

Methods: This qualitative study used a conventional content analysis approach and was conducted from January to September 2023 in Tabriz, Iran. Twenty older adults (aged 60 years and above) who had used a mobility aid, such as a cane or walker, and 14 informal caregivers were purposefully (purposive sampling) selected to participate in the study. Individual semi-structured interviews were conducted until data saturation was achieved. MAXQDA ver. 20.0 software (VERBI Software, Germany) was used to manage and analyze the data.

Results: Based on the participants' perceptions, ICFI means that for an older adult, “social interaction/social participation is limited,” “performing activities of daily living is disallowed,” and “engaging in physical activities and exercising is prohibited.”

Conclusion: Our findings revealed the concept of ICFI from various perspectives in Iranian families with older adults, leading to a clearer understanding of this phenomenon. This aspect should be considered when developing intervention strategies for the care of older adults in home and residential care settings by, health practitioners, gerontologists, and policymakers. This research can serve as a foundation for future studies to develop pertinent indicators and tools for measuring ICFI in the hope of providing sufficient evidence to support interventions that aim to prevent or stop ICFI.

Keywords: Caregivers; Frail Elderly; Aging; Immobilization; Sedentary Behavior