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ABSTRACT

The Namaste Care Family program to improve quality of life of nursing home residents with advanced dementia and positive caregiving experiences of their family caregivers: Study design and first experiences.

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Quality of life of people with advanced dementia can be improved. Family caregivers may feel frustrated with limited contact with their loved ones, which can result in visits perceived as stressful and less meaningful. Although a number of psychosocial interventions are available for people with dementia, few specifically target people with advanced dementia, and they usually stop at the end of life.

We describe the rationale, objectives, and design of the first study that investigates the (cost-) effectiveness of an adapted version of Namaste Care, a psychosocial intervention specific to nursing home residents with advanced dementia. Namaste Care is a 7-day-a-week program with two 2-hour sessions a day, designed to offer meaningful activities with a ‘loving touch’ approach in a calming environment for nursing home residents with advanced dementia or those who cannot engage in the regular activities anymore. We adapted Namaste Care for use in the Netherlands to more strongly involve family caregivers and volunteers, and to emphasize end-of-life care. We perform a cluster-randomized controlled trial in 16 nursing homes and we aim at including 192 residents with advanced dementia and their families.

We expect that the Namaste Care Family program will improve quality of life and care for Dutch nursing home residents with advanced dementia and increase positive experiences for family caregivers in a cost-effective manner. First experiences of residents, staff, and family caregivers with the program will be shared, such as decreased behavioral problems, but also family caregivers’ feelings of disappointment when their loved one did not noticeably respond during a Namaste activity. We will also talk about the challenges of implementing the program, for example how to involve family and volunteers in the program.

The Namaste Care Family program to improve quality of life of nursing home residents with advanced dementia and positive caregiving experiences of their family caregivers: Study design and first experiences

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Rationale

Quality of life of Dutch nursing home residents with advanced dementia can be improved;

- They may be isolated, cannot participate in regular activities, present challenging behaviors, may have unfulfilled needs
- Family caregivers may be frustrated with limited contact with their loved ones
- Few psychosocial interventions available for people with advanced dementia



Namaste Care

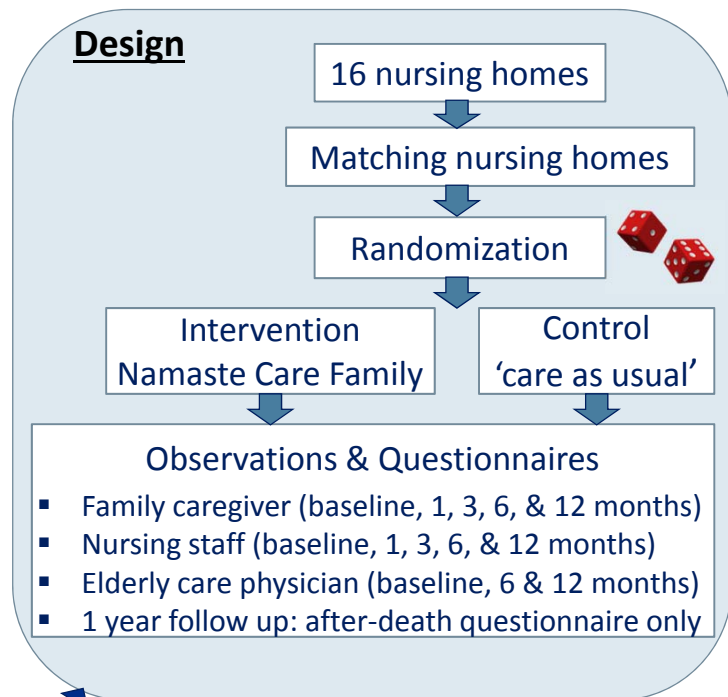
- Psychosocial intervention for people with advanced dementia
- 7-day-a-week program, 2h, twice a day
- Includes person-centered and palliative care approaches and end-of-life care
- Loving touch, presence of others, and meaningful activities



Objectives

- To include the involvement of family caregivers and volunteers in the US Namaste Care program
- To assess effects on:
 - quality of life of people with advanced dementia
 - positive caregiving experiences of family caregivers
- To assess the most effective elements of the program and the cost effectiveness

Design



First experiences & challenges

- Positive effects on people with dementia
 - less challenging behavior, more relaxed after session
- Family caregivers appreciate the extra personal attention for their loved one
 - disappointment if there is no direct noticeable response
- Involving family/volunteers requires effort
 - family caregivers and volunteers prefer specified tasks
- Invest in getting all staff on board
- Continuous support and attention from management is essential

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