Heart work: A thematic analysis of compassion in long-term care

BACKGROUND
• It is important to build an understanding of how compassion is understood and enacted within long-term care (LTC) environments in Canada using a participatory action research approach

RESEARCH TOPIC
• To explore perceptions about compassion when delivering palliative care from the perspective of residents, family members, and healthcare providers in LTC
• To identify potential facilitators and barriers associated with providing compassionate care to residences in Canadian LTC settings

METHODOLOGY
• We led 19 focus groups with a total of 117 individuals at participating LTC sites in one of four Canadian provinces
• Thematic analysis of the recorded focus group discussions was used to identify patterns that shed light on various components of the larger concept of compassion

KEY FINDINGS
• Two themes emerged from the data, each with five sub-themes:
  • 'Conceptualizing Compassion in LTC': outlines an understanding of compassion found to be congruent with previous models
  • 'Organizational compassion': outlines the contextual factors associated with offering compassionate care within LTC settings

CONCLUSION
• Compassion is an under-recognized, yet critical, element of personal and professional relationships formed in LTC that are often bound by systemic barriers
• Future research should focus on recognizing the complexity of factors that influence LTC health-care providers' ability to offer compassionate, patient-centered care