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Title: Staff perceptions and emotional responses to challenging behaviours in mental handicap hospital in Hong Kong

ABSTRACT

Staff attributions and emotional responses about challenging behaviours have been suggested as the significant factors determining staff intervention behaviours. Previous researches on these aspects were mainly conducted in the western countries. The present study investigated the staff perceptions and emotional responses to challenging behaviours in the sole mental handicap hospital of Hong Kong.

A total sample of 152 care staff participated in the study and they were asked to complete self-report questionnaires regarding their causal attributions and emotional responses about challenging behaviours. The data were collected through the translated Chinese version of the Challenging Behaviour Attribution scale and Emotional Responses to Challenging Behaviour scale. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyse the data collected.

The care staff generally rated "Learned behaviour" as the most likely cause of challenging behaviours and reported that they experienced infrequent diversity of negative emotions in response to challenging behaviours. The most frequent emotions they experienced were more on the fear-anxiety dimension. The view of the staff groups with professional qualifications and intensive training in learning disability training on the causes of challenging behaviours were appeared to be more congruous to the contemporary behavioural approach. However, no significant associations could be found between the emotional responses of care staff to challenging behaviours with their professional qualification, work experience or specialty training status.

The study had identified the significance of staff training in positive perspectives of challenging behaviours in learning disability service. Although the care staff might have under-reported their negative emotions about challenging behaviours due to cultural influences, findings of the study extended the understanding on the emotional experience of care staff working with people with challenging behaviours in local context. Implications for future explorations on related areas were briefly considered.