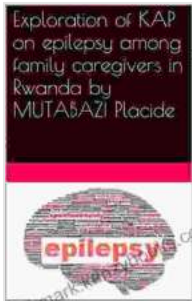


Delving into Kap On Epilepsy: A Comprehensive Exploration of Caregiver Experiences in Rwanda



Exploration of KAP on epilepsy among family caregivers in Rwanda by MUTABAZI Placide

by Jessika Schwab

★★★★☆ 4.1 out of 5

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Epilepsy, a neurological disorder characterized by recurrent seizures, affects millions worldwide. In Rwanda, the condition remains a significant public health concern, with limited access to specialized healthcare and widespread stigma surrounding the disease. Family caregivers play a crucial role in supporting individuals with epilepsy, often assuming the responsibility of providing daily care, emotional support, and advocating for their loved ones.

The concept of "Kap," deeply rooted in Rwandan culture, encompasses beliefs, attitudes, and practices related to illness and well-being. This study aims to explore the influence of Kap on epilepsy among family caregivers in

Rwanda, shedding light on the challenges and complexities they face in providing care.

Methodology

The study employed a qualitative approach, utilizing in-depth interviews with 30 family caregivers of individuals with epilepsy in rural and urban areas of Rwanda. The interviews explored their beliefs about epilepsy, their caregiving experiences, and the impact of Kap on their lives.

Findings

Beliefs About Epilepsy

Caregivers held a range of beliefs about epilepsy, influenced by traditional and modern understandings of the condition. Some perceived epilepsy as a supernatural punishment or a result of witchcraft, while others attributed it to genetic or environmental factors. These beliefs shaped their caregiving practices and influenced their interactions with healthcare professionals.

Caregiving Experiences

Caregivers reported a heavy burden of care, including managing seizures, providing medication, and ensuring their loved ones' safety. They often faced social isolation and stigma from their communities, leading to feelings of loneliness and depression. Access to healthcare services was limited, with caregivers struggling to obtain appropriate medications and specialized support.

Impact of Kap

Kap played a significant role in shaping caregivers' experiences. Beliefs about the spiritual or supernatural origins of epilepsy led to traditional

healing practices alongside conventional medical treatment. Caregivers often sought help from traditional healers, believing they possessed special powers or knowledge to cure the condition.

Kap also influenced the decision-making process regarding treatment options. Caregivers might delay or avoid seeking medical care due to fear of stigmatization or a belief that traditional remedies were more effective. This could lead to delayed diagnosis and treatment, potentially worsening the condition.

Discussion

The study highlights the profound impact of Kap on epilepsy caregiving in Rwanda. Caregivers' beliefs and practices are deeply rooted in cultural and traditional understandings of the condition, which can both support and hinder their caregiving role.

The study calls for increased awareness and education about epilepsy to dispel stigma and promote early diagnosis and treatment. Healthcare professionals need to be sensitive to the cultural beliefs and practices of caregivers, working collaboratively with them to develop culturally appropriate care plans.

Support systems for family caregivers are crucial, including respite care, counseling services, and support groups. These interventions can alleviate the burden of caregiving and promote the well-being of both caregivers and individuals with epilepsy.

The study provides a valuable insight into the complexities of epilepsy caregiving in Rwanda, highlighting the influence of Kap on caregivers'

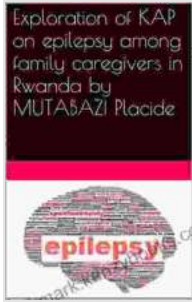
beliefs, experiences, and practices. It underscores the need for a holistic approach to epilepsy care, addressing both medical and cultural factors to improve outcomes for individuals with epilepsy and their families.

Further research is recommended to explore the effectiveness of culturally sensitive interventions and advocate for policies that support family caregivers of individuals with epilepsy in Rwanda and beyond.

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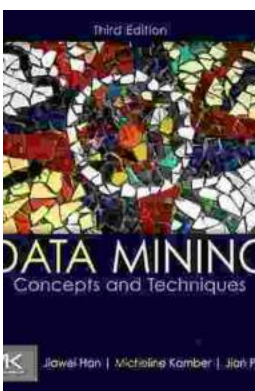
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