Emotional challenges and training needs in geriatric care: A scoping review for future healthcare professionals

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: The global rise in the older adult population has intensified the demand for healthcare professionals trained in geriatric care. However, persistent workforce shortages, inadequate training, and emotionally challenging work environments continue to deter healthcare trainees from pursuing this field. This scoping review aims to (1) identify common emotional challenges faced by healthcare professionals working with older adults, (2) explore the influence of emotional preparedness on healthcare students' career intentions in geriatrics, and (3) synthesize evidence-based strategies to support emotional resilience and preparedness among healthcare trainees. **Materials and Methods:** A scoping review guided by the PRISMA-ScR protocol was conducted of peer-reviewed literature (2010–2025) using structured searches in Scopus. Search terms included "geriatric care," "emotional challenge," "training interventions," and "career choice." Studies were included if published in English and involved healthcare professionals or trainees (doctors, nurses, paramedics). Non-English texts and non-empirical articles were excluded. **Results:** Findings highlight that healthcare professionals frequently face moral distress, burnout, ageism, emotional labour, and complex patient interactions in geriatric settings. These challenges are compounded by systemic factors such as inadequate training, poor working conditions, and limited professional recognition. Emotional unpreparedness was found to significantly influence negative attitudes and reluctance among students to specialize in geriatrics. Evidence-based interventions including early clinical exposure, interprofessional education, mentorship, structured debriefing and experiential learning were shown to enhance emotional readiness and increase interest in geriatric careers. **Conclusion:** To build a compassionate and sustainable geriatric workforce, healthcare training programs must integrate targeted emotional preparedness strategies. Addressing the emotional realities of geriatric care through education, support, and systemic reform is essential to foster resilience, reduce burnout, and motivate future professionals to serve aging populations.

Keywords: Geriatric care, emotional challenge, training interventions, student perceptions, career choice