



**NEEDING, PROVIDING AND SUPPORTING CARE: A
MIXED-METHODS STUDY OF OLDER ADULTS'
FUNCTIONAL ABILITIES AND CARE NEEDS,
CAREGIVERS' LIVED EXPERIENCES, AND SOCIAL
WORKERS' CONTRIBUTIONS IN THE LIVES OF
OLDER ADULTS IN GHANA**

Kofi Awuviry-Newton

(Bachelor of Social Work)

Priority Research Centre for Generational Health and Ageing

School of Medicine and Public Health, Faculty of Health

University of Newcastle, Australia.

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Statement of Originality

I, solemnly and sincerely declare that the thesis with the title “Needing, providing and supporting care: A mixed-methods study of older adults ‘functional abilities and care needs, caregivers’ lived experiences, and social workers contributions in the lives of older adults in Ghana” is my own work. The thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text. I give consent to the final version of my thesis being made available worldwide when deposited in the University’s Digital Repository**, subject to the provisions of the Copyright Act 1968.

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Acknowledgement of Authorship

I hereby certify that the work embodied in this thesis contains a published paper/scholarly work of which I am a joint author. I have included as part of the thesis a written statement, endorsed by my supervisor, attesting to my contribution to the joint publication/scholarly work.

Kofi Awuviry-Newton:

Date: 02/06/2020

Statement of Contribution

This is to certify that Research Higher Degree Candidate Kofi Awuviry-Newton has contributed to the following papers by his contributions in developing research questions, methodology and statistical analysis of data, interpretation of results and writing of manuscript.

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Name	Signature	Date
Kofi Awuviry-Newton		26.05.2020
Kylie Wales		28.05.2020

Meredith Tavener

28.05.2020

Julie Byles

27.05.2020

Dedication

I dedicate this project to my son Jojo.

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1. Biostatistics (A and B)
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4. Public Health Implication for Ageing Population
5. Qualitative Methods in Health Research
6. Introduction to Social Science Research Methodology

Conflict of Interest

I hereby declare that there are no conflicts of interests.

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Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Descriptor
WHO-ICF	the World Health Organisation's International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health
IPA	Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis
WHO	World Health Organisation
SAGE	Study on Global Ageing and Adult Health
LMICs	Low-and middle-income countries
WHO-SAGE	World Health Organisation's Study on global AGEing and adult health
ADLs	Activities of Daily Living
IADLs	Instrumental Activities of Daily Living
KATH	Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital
CF	Consent Form
PIS	Participants Information Statement
Ghc	Ghana Cedi
IFSW	International Federation of Social Workers
TA	Thematic Analysis
PF	Personal Factors
BFS	Body Functional and Structure
HC	Health Condition
AL	Activity Limitation
EF	Environmental Factors
P	Participation
SD	Standard Deviation
COR	Crude Odds Ratio
CI	Confidence Interval
OR	Odds Ratio
AOR	Adjusted Odds Ratio

Abstract

Globally, disability and frailty are the significant determinants of functional difficulties among older adults; however, the prevalence and experiences of specific functional difficulties among older adults to understand their care needs in Ghana are unclear. Often, functional difficulties lead to an increasing need for care; however, in the Ghanaian context, little is known of the lived experiences of caregivers caring for older adults needing care. Moreover, social workers contributions to the lives of older adults and their caregivers in Ghana are not documented. This study employed a concurrent mixed-method design to examine older adults' functional abilities, care needs, and meeting these needs for Ghana's caregivers and social workers. There were five specific aims to achieve the above-mentioned overall thesis' aim. The first aim was to examine the prevalence of functional difficulties among adults 50 years or older, with particular attention to toileting which may be more prevalent in a context where accessible toileting is less widely available, and there are therefore more environmental challenges and a poorer person-environment fit. The second aim was to examine factors contributing to caregiver availability for older adults, and the third was to explore the lived experiences of older adults regarding their functional abilities. The fourth aim was to explore the lived experiences of caregivers caring for older adults living with functional difficulties. Finally, the fifth aim was to investigate the roles and capacities of social workers in older adults and their caregivers' lives. The results revealed a high need for care among older adults depicted from the high prevalence and experience of functional difficulties among older adults, especially in older women compared to older men in Ghana. Toileting difficulty was observed to be more common than expected to other difficulties in daily

living activities and was related to personal, environmental, and health-related factors. Notably, a large proportion of older adults in Ghana do not have access to a plumbed toilet, increasing the environmental challenges associated with toileting and exacerbating other disabilities. Though about 86% of older adults have caregivers available to care for them, older adults living as a widow or widower did not receive any government or non-governmental financial support and were less likely to have a caregiver available to care for them. The qualitative interviews with older adults regarding their functional abilities revealed that older adults admit having trouble in life, feel anxious at times, and sometimes do not feel human; however, many employed strategies to cope with their restrictions. Despite the functional difficulties they experienced, they desired to be healthy and productive. The qualitative interviews with caregiver participants revealed caregivers' expressed commitment to caring for older adults, motivated primarily by reciprocity, despite internal and external stressors, and the desire to fulfil personal needs. Qualitative interviews with social workers revealed that though, they are working to assist older adults in meeting their needs, their capacities were limited by lack of resources. When all these findings are put together, they suggest that older adults' functional difficulties posed pressure on older adults themselves, their caregivers and social workers. The findings facilitate our understanding of older adults' care needs, emphasising the functional, social, and environmental factors influencing older adults' functional status and demonstrating the need for better systems to support the care needs of older adults and those who care for them.