

Titre : **Middle Managers' Behavioral Exemplarity: A Sine qua non Condition for Knowledge Transfer**

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Résumé

As healthcare organizations are facing major challenges, many of them decide to adopt new approaches to management, care and services. This paper presents a study on the role of middle managers in the transfer of a person-centered management and care approach at the Eastern Townships Physical Rehabilitation Centre in Quebec, Canada. It should interest researchers and decision makers who are paying attention to the crucial role of middle managers in transferring knowledge within healthcare organizations. The design of this multi-case qualitative, exploratory and constructivist research includes six cases, representing the six middle managers of the studied organization. The multi-case study allows us to contrast cases of successful middle managers from the ones who were not truly able to transfer the person-centered management and care approach in their unit. Data production and analysis are done with methods used in grounded theory. Here are the main findings generated by this research. Firstly, our analysis reveals that, in spite of top management efforts to disseminate a person-centered approach to management and care throughout the organization, the knowledge transfer process mainly depends on the absorptive capacity of the middle manager within the unit. When the middle manager has the capacity to absorb the person-centered approach, often because it is compatible with his profound convictions, this capacity is first expressed through his behavioral exemplarity. In the eyes of his employees, the middle manager primarily represents an embodied example of the person-centered approach through his behavior. Therefore, the behavioral exemplarity of the middle manager came out as a *sine qua non* condition through which is possible the co-construction of new person-centered care practices to be offered to patients of the unit. Secondly, the results bring to the forefront the importance of macro and micro contexts as determinant variables in the transfer of a person-centered management and care approach. To conclude this paper, we provide lessons learned from the study and draw on implications for practice and future theorizing.