

## editorial

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### Introduction

Welcome to Volume 8, Issue 3 of the *International Journal of Care and Caring*. Our third issue in this 2024 volume brings together eight peer-reviewed articles from authors based in or writing about Australia, Canada, Cuba, Germany, Sri Lanka, the UK and the US, as well as a review of international literature. It also contains contributions from Australia and the UK in our ‘Debates and issues’ section and reviews of three recent books certain to be of interest to our readers provided by contributors in the UK and India.

### Peer-reviewed articles

In the first of eight peer-reviewed articles, ‘Ageing, migration, and old age care in transnational Cuba’, [Vincent Horn and Cornelia Schewppe \(2024\)](#) (Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz, Germany) consider Cuba’s ageing population in the context of the numerous departures of younger Cubans to other countries and examine what this means for the care of older Cubans. In the absence of adequate public services, they note the emergence of a private, home-based care market for older people in Cuba and consider how this development, alongside the practice of sending remittances home from overseas, is exacerbating socio-economic inequalities between older Cubans.

Our next article, ‘Interprofessional practice and person-centred care: moral contexts and ethical conflicts in the US and Canada’, by [Phillip G. Clark \(2024\)](#) (University of Rhode Island, USA), examines health and social care services and systems, drawing on the concept of moral distress. The main focus in the examples drawn from the two countries is on interprofessional practice and person-centred care. The article explores how the quality of care might be improved and its costs reduced through changes at the systems level and considers what this would mean for interactions between individuals, interprofessional teams and organisations.

A novel focus of the subsequent contribution, by [Camille Allard \(2024\)](#) (University of Birmingham, UK), based on her study of support for working carers in England, is the attention paid to carers’ voice in advocating for and facilitating access to workplace support. In ‘Speaking up as a working carer: working carers’ use of voice and struggles for representation in the workplace’, Allard explores the development of carers’ leave policies in three settings. She finds that these are shaped by the various voice mechanisms to which carers have access, by workers’ perceptions of their care responsibilities and by stigma, work processes and inequalities.

The following article, also on how carers reconcile paid work and unpaid care, is based on a systematic review undertaken by an international group of scholars. ‘The relevance of the workplace for combining employment and informal care for older adults: results of a systematic literature review’ is authored by Thomas Geisen, Sibylle Nideröst, Andrin Altherr, Salome Schenk and Reka Schweighoffer (University of Applied Sciences and Arts, Northwestern Switzerland) and Karl Krajic, Ingrid Mairhuber and Charlotte Dötig (Working Life Research Centre, Vienna [FORBA]) (Geisen et al, 2024). The authors find that how formal and informal supports and barriers at the company level affect combining paid work and unpaid care for older adults is yet to be adequately investigated. Although their review highlights what can be learned from research on practices developed to maintain a sustainable work–care balance, they conclude that firms rarely address this topic seriously and find that many are unaware of the challenges their employees face or of the support they need. Where it exists, firm-based support tends to favour individual, case-based solutions. The authors conclude that better support for companies and carers is rather urgently needed and that the knowledge base needed for this requires substantial development.

We turn next to a contribution from Australia. In “‘Being a carer, you just get forgotten!’: exploring the experiences and opportunities of informal primary carers in Australia’, Fleur Sharafizad, Esme Franken and Uma Jogulu (Edith Cowan University, Australia) and Stephen Teo (Northumbria University, UK) (Sharafizad et al, 2024) draw on data collected from 36 interviews with carers who were invited to engage in a pilot training programme designed to enhance their opportunities. The authors use self-determination theory in their analysis and find that targeted, nuanced and meaningful supports are required to maintain carers’ motivation and well-being and support their psychological needs.

From authors in Sri Lanka, ‘Psychological experiences of family carers of people with spinal cord injury paraplegia: an explorative qualitative study’, K.V.G.S.G.Vithana (Karapitiya Teaching Hospital), T.A. Asurakkody (University of Colombo) and D.P. Perera (University of Kelaniya) (Vithana et al, 2024) explore the psychological experiences of carers of people with this condition, a significant health problem in their country. The article, based on a phenomenological study of 17 carers, used thematic analysis to identify four themes: carer emotions regarding the process of caring; feelings related to a family member’s condition; beliefs beyond the physical world; and behaviour changes due to psychological distress. The authors consider their findings important for interventions to address the psychological needs of carers not only in Sri Lanka but also in similar Asian communities in other parts of the world.

In ‘What happens when care homes close? A review of the literature’, by Tom Douglass, Shazia Zafar and Jon Glasby (University of Birmingham, UK) (Douglass et al, 2024), the authors present findings from an analytical narrative review of research on the process and outcomes of care home closures in the UK. Such closures, they note, have arisen and are expected to continue in England’s ‘fraught fiscal and post-pandemic context’. Observing that such closures ought to be organised to minimise distress or negative outcomes for residents, they find weak underpinning research to draw on to establish good practice. They highlight gaps in understanding of outcomes for older people and the experiences of care staff, as well as weak economic evidence and little information on the perspectives of social care leaders.

Our eighth and final article in this section is ‘Community aged care in Australia: the need for innovative programmes to boost workforce capacity’, by Pauline Savy, Suzanne Hodgkin and Erin Conway (Australian Catholic University, Australia) (Savy et al, 2024). In their integrative review, the authors observe that in Western nations, ‘ageing in place’ policies rely on having an adequate and skilled aged care workforce. Yet, the impact of policy reforms in Australia, they find, has led to a decline in the size and skills of this workforce. This is problematic given the need to upskill and sustain these workers as the frailty and health needs of those they support have grown. Their results emphasise current workforce deficits and a lack of peer-reviewed reports of implemented programmes; nevertheless, the authors identify a few studies that exemplify the capacity and willingness of workers and providers to trial measures designed to increase the recruitment, retention, skill and job satisfaction of care workers.

## Debates and issues

Our ‘Debates and issues’ section in this issue contains two contributions. The first, ‘Social care: time for a name change?’, by UK and Australian academics at the Universities of Birmingham and Warwick (UK) and Monash University (Australia) discusses the usefulness of the term ‘social care’. The authors note that this term has been used in the UK for decades and is understood in both countries to describe the provision of social work, personal care, protection or social support services for those with needs arising from illness, disability, old age and/or poverty. They argue that including the word ‘social’ is merited when the concept is framed in relation to the shared human need for care and support and conclude that it is thus preferable to the descriptively simple term ‘long-term care’.

Our second item in this section is by Andrea Barbieri (ASL CN1, Italy) and Eleonora Rossero (University of Turin, Italy): ‘Training is caring: promoting youth mental health through peer-led viticultural practice’. Their contribution describes an intervention in youth mental healthcare in which participants and students worked together in vineyards, experiencing peer training and co-training. The authors discuss the affective and sensory involvement of participants with the vines, as well as with other participants and students, and show how the relationships students formed with participants nurtured an empathic disposition that contributed to the destigmatisation of mental ill health.

## Book reviews

We are very grateful to the three reviewers who contributed to this issue:

- Joanna Brown (King’s College London, UK), for her review of *Social Care in the UK’s Four Nations: Between Two Paradigms*, by Catherine Needham and Patrick Hall (2023);
- Valentina Hinojosa (University of Southampton, UK), for her review of *Care, Crisis and Activism: The Politics of Everyday Life*, by Eleanor Jupp (2022); and
- Sayendri Panchadhyayi (National Law School of India University, India), for her review of *Care and Support Rights after Neoliberalism: Balancing Competing Claims through Policy and Law*, by Yvette Maker (2022).

Our warm thanks to all contributors, to the journal's editorial and production teams, to our many anonymous, diligent and supportive peer reviewers, and to the journal's Editorial Advisory Board. Their contributions make the journal possible and exemplify a shared commitment to the global focus, reach and ambitions of the *International Journal of Care and Caring* and to a wider understanding of the vital importance of care and caring around the world.

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### Conflict of interest

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest.

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