‘Leisure, Tourism and Caregiving’

Population aging occurs at different rates in various regions of the world (Bloom & Canning, 2006; Myers, 1997). Bloom and Canning (2006) indicated that developing nations are expanding more rapidly than developed nations and are using more resources as life expectancy increases. In developed countries such as Australia and Canada, life expectancy is 78 years for men and 83 years for women, while life expectancy in Nigeria is 45 for men and 46 for women (World Health Organization Statistics, 2007). The World Health Organization reports that approximately 10% of the world’s population (600 million people, including about 200 million children) are living with some form of mental, physical, or intellectual disability (WHO, n.d.). The number of people living with disabilities will continue to grow due to population aging, population growth, and medical advances that prolong life (WHO, n.d.). Currently there is no agreement on definitions and minimal comparable information on the incidence, distribution of, and trends of disability impairments. Persons with disabilities are not a homogeneous group. In general, persons with disabilities can be divided into two groups; persons born with a disability, and persons who acquire a disability due to a trauma (e.g. such as a person with a traumatic brain injury), war or chronic condition. Each society will have differing perspectives on persons with disabilities (Mobily & Ostiguy, 2004). A person with a disability resides in a family. Often a family member provides caregiving to the person, the caregiver often sacrifices their leisure opportunities to assist the family member (Bedini & Bilbro, 1991; Bedini and Guinan, 1996, Bedini, & Phoenix, 1999, Loucks-Atkinson, Kleiber & Williamson, 2006; Singleton, 2006).

The term “leisure” has been criticized as being “Eurocentric, and Androcentric” (Fox, 1994, 2006; Freysinger, 1999; Iwaskaki, Nishino, Onada, & Bowling, 2007). The question arises how does the person define the term “Leisure” within their lens. With the aging population, individuals within society are now confronted with caregiving for their elders. One area of caregiver’s lives that is sacrificed is their personal leisure pursuits (Bedini & Bilbro, 1991; Bedini & Guinan, 1996, Bedini & Phoenix, 1999, Loucks-Atkinson, Kleiber & Williamson, 2006; Singleton, 2006). Caregiving has historically focused on significant others, and what they sacrifice when caregiving within “leisure” (Bedini & Phoenix, 1999, Loucks-Atkinson, Kleiber & Williamson, 2006; Singleton, 2006). How does the individual with a disability provide caregiving for self within a leisure opportunity? The caregiving term has been generated in the literature from a North American and European industrial society perspective. The question arises how are the terms “leisure” and “caregiving” affect the individual’s leisure and tourism pursuits (Mactavish, McKay, Iwasaki & Betteridge, 2007; Zabriske & McCormick, 2001)?
The special issue of ‘Recreation and Society in Africa, Asia & Latin America’ sought interested researchers to contribute theoretical and/or empirical papers related to topics such as:

- The role of caregiving in the construction of leisure and tourism environments and experiences.
- What is the personal and or economic impact related to caregivers on their leisure and tourism choices
- The social and/or cultural construction of caregiving in their society and this construction relates to their leisure and tourism experiences
- The role of caregiving in the construction of cultural, sub-cultural and personal identities
- The role of caregiving in the construction and/or deconstruction of gendered identities within their societies related to Leisure and Tourism.
- Caregiving as a barrier/constraint to leisure and tourism opportunities
- What support do service providers and government agencies provide for the caregivers and how, in turn, do they affect, leisure and tourism opportunities?
- How cultures affect the identity of caregiving and the terms of Leisure and Tourism?

This special issue of ‘Recreation and Society in Africa, Asia & Latin America’ provided a forum for expanding current understandings of the linkages between leisure, tourism, and caregiving and the implications of these links for wider society. The studies in this special edition provide insights into how caregiving may affect the experience of leisure and tourism.

The Hsieh and Van Puymbroeck article “Leisure as a means of Coping: The experience of Taiwanese Parents of Adult Children with Disabilities” frames the experience within the Taiwanese culture and resources available to the person and the family. The article addresses cultural understanding of the lived experience of a person with a disability and how person’s abilities are framed within the society they reside. The article provides a perspective of the parent’s experience of leisure with their child with a disability. This article will be beneficial to leisure providers in understanding how a person culture may frame their perspectives of a person with a disability.

The Lopez and Campbell article “reconceptualizing the Sandwich Generation”; Perceived caring Identities and family vacations” provides insights into how a family interacts on a family vacation. This research builds upon previous research in the area of family vacations (Mayo & Jarvis, 1981; Shaw, Delamare & Havitz 2008). This article also builds upon how generation of a family with a culture may influence how the family may experience a vacation (Ujomoto, 1981). The authors provide insights to the transitions family members make prior to an experience during the experience, upon return within a cultural lens. The author’s research will be beneficial to service providers when they are providing leisure or tourism opportunities within the culture of the family.

The article by Cornelio, Sardo, Bonaiuti, Arbosti, Pignataro, Cornelio, and Fiippini provides an understanding of how culture expectations frames rehabilitation process.
Individuals with a neurological condition have differing levels of abilities that may influence their possibility of travelling and their use of leisure time. The authors examined three area personal factors, behavioral function and the ability to travel. It appears from the findings of this study that clinical scales do not predict patients’ abilities and their needs in physical and social environments. Doctors should encourage persons with disabilities in determining and meeting the challenges they face in physical and social environment. Persons understand their own needs better than anyone else and therefore they should be encouraged to define their needs. This article provides insight the prerequisite skills that are required to enable a person to travel. This article will assets leisure service providers in understanding the abilities of a person prior to the individual traveling.

Caregiving has often been focused on the person assisting the person with differing levels of abilities. The dementia research has tended to focus on the person providing caregiving, little is known of about the individual living with memory loss access an use of leisure. The Genoe study revealed that leisure contributed to five aspects of meaning-focused coping for the person with dementia, including benefit finding, benefit reminding, adaptive goal processes, reordering priorities, and infusing ordinary activities with meaning. This study has implications for provision of leisure and tourism services. Tourism agencies in the United Kingdom are recognizing that providing access to tourism for persons with dementia is beneficial to the person and family as well as their industry (www.dementiaholiday.co.uk).

The articles in this special issue provide insights into the meaning of leisure and tourism within a care giving perspective either self, with family, members or within a rehabilitation environment. Leisure and Tourism is the social construction of the meaning making for the person, caregiver or care provider. The ability to engage or to make a meaning from a Leisure/Tourism opportunity should not be underestimated by the family member, self, health care provider or Leisure Tourism provider. The term caregiving is a socially constructed term that sometimes does not reflect the lived experience of the person, family member or health care provider. The Leisure and Tourism industry needs to recognize the abilities of the person who is self caregiving, providing caregiving for a family member or empowering a person to make leisure and tourism choices across the Life course (Darcy, 2010; Bukalis, D., & Darcy, S., 2011; Singleton, 2006, www.dementiaholiday.co.uk).
References


