

The Health Implications of Caring for Someone with Dementia and the Importance of Self-Care

Home Care Assistance recognizes the importance of providing seniors with the best quality of life possible. We have found that seniors describe quality of life as having the ability to remain independent inside of their homes. Our integrated, science-based approach to supporting individual lifestyles and quality longevity, aims to achieve the independence sought by seniors.

The aging process can become difficult for the family members of older adults who want to provide their support for their loved ones, but start experiencing financial and emotional challenges overtime. These challenges can become even more difficult when their loved one is suffering from Alzheimer's disease and other dementias. In the United States, there are roughly 5.5 million Americans living with dementia, and the care for dementia costs more than the care for cancer (\$77 billion) and heart disease (\$102 billion) combined at \$259 billion.



Result #1: Dementia caregivers experience higher rates of physical, emotional, and mental burnout.

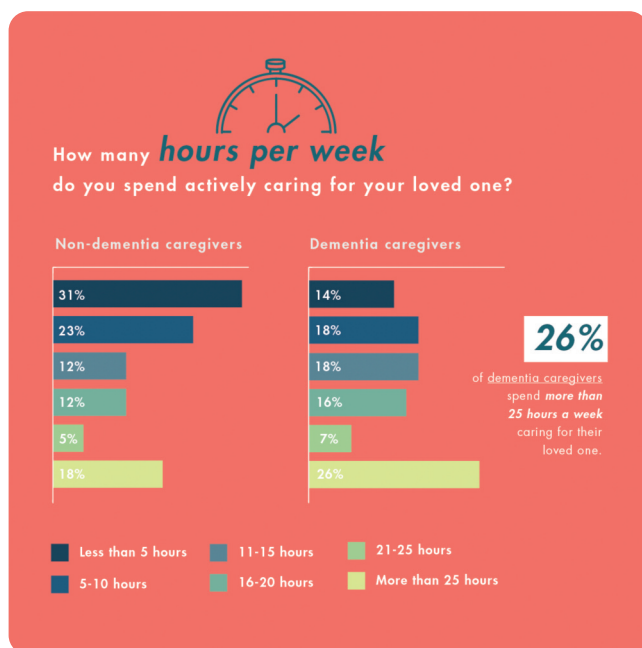
Often referred to as "caregiver burnout", the survey found that dementia caregivers were seven times more likely to experience daily physical, emotional and mental exhaustion from caregiving than non-dementia caregivers. Dementia caregivers are also three times more likely to feel extreme stress from their caregiving responsibilities than other types of caregivers.

Result #2: Dementia caregivers experience stress from watching their loved ones decline rather than experiencing stress from work and care balance experienced by other caregivers.

In contrast to other types of care that may focus on recovery and rehabilitation, dementia caregiving can oftentimes be more challenging when a loved one is facing a long, inevitable deadline. Based on the survey results, 38 percent of dementia caregivers feel the most stress from watching their loved one decline, while 33 percent of those caring for a loved one without dementia feel the most stress from having to juggle their career and caregiving responsibilities. If we compare male caregivers to female caregivers, we found that male dementia caregivers were 21 percent more likely to feel stressed from having to juggle their job and caregiving responsibilities than female dementia caregivers.

Result #3: Female dementia caregivers experience higher rates of caregiver guilt.

Two-thirds of the dementia caregiver demographic are women. According to the survey, female dementia caregivers were 61 percent more likely to feel extreme guilt for not tending to their own family and children's needs than non-dementia female caregivers.



Behind these numbers lies a hidden emotional cost to family caregivers who help those with Alzheimer's and other dementias manage daily living. Family members who choose to become caregivers experience negative health implications. To grasp an understanding of the severity of these implications, Home Care Assistance conducted a survey through a third party research firm. In the study, 670 family caregivers were surveyed and asked questions regarding their health. Through careful analysis of our research findings, we concluded the following results:

These findings demonstrate that the health of family caregivers can be compromised when providing care for their loved ones with dementia. It's clear that family caregivers need to keep in mind their own physical, mental and emotional well-being by focusing on self-care. At Home Care Assistance, we offer the support and resources needed for professional and family caregivers to best take care of an aging loved one with dementia and him or herself. For more information, visit www.HCAJerseyShore.com or call 1-732-930-1935.