

# SIBLINGS CARING FOR PARENTS WITH DEMENTIA

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## CAREGIVING IS A “FAMILY AFFAIR”

- Most of the previous work on family caregiving has focused on a single primary caregiver- but many of us know that caregiving is often a “family affair” that involves multiple family members.
- Family members can be a source of support and stress to each other.

## CAREGIVING IS A “FAMILY AFFAIR”

- Relationships with family members impact health and well-being.
- Negative relationships have been shown to play a more salient role in these processes.
- Research has documented an association between sibling conflict and psychological well-being.
- Variation in these processes by factors such as gender and race.

# The Consequences of Caregiving

## Financial

- Early retirement
- Reduced income
- Insurance

## Physical

74% reported concern about maintaining their physical health

- Increased frailty
- Increased chronic conditions
- Poorer overall health
- Higher mortality

## Life Quality

- ~ 60% have high to very high emotional stress
- ~ 40% suffer from depression compared to 5-15% of non-caregivers of similar ages
- Depression rates increase with illness/symptom severity/dementia

# Other Factors that Impact Caregiving

## Physiological

- Behavioral symptoms of the person with dementia-stressful to caregiver
- Co-existing medical conditions of the person with dementia – too much care needed



## • Relational

Diminishing reciprocity (give back)

Balancing caregiving and self-care

Lack of help from family members and friends/ conflict

Belief that one has no choice about caregiving

Personality characteristics of the caregiver and the care recipient

Prior relationship

Uncertainty

Changing Roles

# Caregiving and Stress

- **Why do some caregivers for persons with dementia manage fairly well while others do not?**
- - What is the role of **stress** to caregivers and their own health?
- - How does caregiving with siblings influence stress levels?

- Studies suggest that caregivers who find meaning through caregiving may experience a partial reduction in burden.



# Stress Affects Us in Many Ways

**Our bodies.**



**Our behavior  
and interactions.**



**Our thoughts  
and feelings.**

# The Effect of Stress on Our Bodies

## When we are stressed, our:

- Blood pressure rises → can lead to stroke
- Breathing becomes more rapid → panic attacks
- Digestive system slows down → indigestion.
- Heart rate (pulse) rises → anxiety
- Immune system goes down → illness
- Muscles become tense → pain
- Sleeping can be more of a problem → fatigue/ memory issues







We are currently recruiting two adult children within the same family to discuss their unique experiences of providing care to an older parent with dementia.

THIS STUDY IS DESIGNED TO BE LOW  
MAINTENANCE AND ALL DATA COLLECTION CAN  
TAKE PLACE WITHIN YOUR OWN HOME.

- Participants will:
  - Engage in a conversation with their sibling using Zoom.
  - Complete 3 online surveys.
  - Self-collect hair and saliva to **measure stress hormones.**
- Each participant will be compensated up to \$95 for their time.



## Siblings Caring for Parents with Dementia



Participation can happen completely from your own home. You and a sibling will:

- Complete online surveys
- Participate in a 90-minute online video meeting about caring for your parent with Alzheimer's disease or related dementia
- Self-collect hair and saliva samples to measure stress hormones

Participants will receive up to \$95 as compensation for their time.

Do you care for a parent with Alzheimer's disease or related dementia? If you are interested in participating in this study, please contact Dr. Megan Gilligan at [mgilliga@iastate.edu](mailto:mgilliga@iastate.edu) | Phone: +1-515-294-5074 or

Scan the QR code or type in the link below for more information about the study and a chance to provide your contact information to the research team.

<https://tinyurl.com/485mmt8>



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