

Elderly patient care with Alzheimers: Can family caregiver information on illness make a difference?

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The research deals with the care of elderly patients with Alzheimer's disease, which is a severe dementia associated with old age and a high increase of diagnosis is observed in Brazil. The objectives were the recognition of importance that a regular multi-professional course is given to a family caregiver; exercises the quality of accompaniment to the elderly that is to recognize the role of health education. Participants comprised group A of caregivers who participated in a course that is regularly offered at the Taguatinga Health Unit, reference center for geriatric care and in group B of caregivers who did not participate in the course. The research is qualitative and descriptive. The collection was carried out in April and May of 2017 through a structured interview. Content analysis was used, and the research was approved by the Government Ethics Committee. The majority profiles of the interviewees are of the women married over 45 years old and some elderly without a higher educational degree. They are usually daughters who have lived with elderly people for more than seven years. Respondents in group A reported having knowledge about the disease and felt prepared to deal with care for the elderly, unlike group B, who stated lack of knowledge and feeling of unpreparedness for dealing with the elderly. Both groups showed similarity only when they agreed on the importance of a course of care. In general, the research presents questions that merit reflection (Metacognitive Reflection and Insight Therapy). We recognize the importance of health education and its positive impact on the complex chain that is care for the elderly with Alzheimer's and validates the relevance of the course periodically offered by a health unit that has turned to this significant clientele, who are family caregivers, a strategic link between the elderly and health services.

Caring for someone with Alzheimer's disease or another type of dementia can be a long, stressful, and intensely emotional journey. But you're not alone. In the United States, there are more than 16 million people caring for someone with dementia, and many millions more around the world. As there is currently no cure for Alzheimer's or dementia, it is often your caregiving and support that makes the biggest difference to your loved one's quality of life. That is a remarkable gift.

However, caregiving can also become all-consuming. As your loved one's cognitive, physical, and functional abilities gradually diminish over time, it's easy to become overwhelmed, disheartened, and neglect your own health and well-being. The burden of caregiving can put you at increased risk for significant health problems and many dementia caregivers experience depression, high levels of stress, or even burnout. And nearly all Alzheimer's or dementia caregivers at some time experience sadness, anxiety, loneliness, and exhaustion. Seeking help and support along the way is not a luxury; it's a necessity.

Just as each individual with Alzheimer's disease or dementia progresses differently, so too can the caregiving experience vary widely from person to person. However, there are strategies that can aid you as a caregiver and help make your caregiving journey as rewarding as it is challenging.

Caring for a person with Alzheimer's disease or dementia can often seem

to be a series of grief experiences as you watch your loved one's memories disappear and skills erode. The person with dementia will change and behave in different, sometimes disturbing or upsetting ways. For both caregivers and their patients, these changes can produce an emotional wallop of confusion, frustration, and sadness.

As the disease advances through the different stages, your loved one's needs increase, your caregiving and financial responsibilities become more challenging, and the fatigue, stress, and isolation can become overwhelming. At the same time, the ability of your loved one to show appreciation for all your hard work only diminishes. Caregiving can literally seem like a thankless task.

As life expectancies increase, medical treatments advance, and increasing numbers of people live with chronic illness and disabilities, more and more of us find ourselves caring for a loved one at home. Whether you're taking care of an aging parent, a handicapped spouse, or looking after a child with a physical or mental illness, providing care for a family member in need is an act of kindness, love, and loyalty. Day after day, you gift your loved one your care and attention, improving their quality of life, even if they're unable to express their gratitude.

Regardless of your particular circumstances, being a family caregiver is a challenging role and likely one that you haven't been trained to undertake. And like many family caregivers, you probably never anticipated this situation. However, you don't have to be a nursing expert, a superhero, or a saint in order to be a good family caregiver. With the right help and support, you can provide loving, effective care without having to sacrifice yourself in the process. And that can make family caregiving a more rewarding experience—for both you and your loved one.