

# Caring for a relative with Alzheimer's disease: an investigation into the difficulties experienced by 17 caregivers at home and development of an educational brochure.

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## Introduction

According to Alzheimer Disease International, 50 million people worldwide are living with dementia (1 million in Italy). This number will more than triple to 152 million by 2050. The most common cause is the Alzheimer's disease and it accounts for 50-60% of all cases. It implies serious difficulties for the patients to perform ADLs and compromises their self-sufficiency. Therefore, from the early stages, another person's support is required: the caregiver, who often faces difficult and delicate situations to handle.

## Objectives

The objective was to acknowledge difficulties experienced by 17 caregivers of people with Alzheimer's disease who attend an Alzheimer's day care centre in Ferrara and then create an educational brochure to help them in caring for their relatives.

## Materials and Methods

The study was conducted by administering a questionnaire of 11 questions about the difficulties experienced during care activities and daily life. Data were collected anonymously and aggregated between August and September 2018. The educational brochure was created after consulting the main guidelines concerning care for Alzheimer's sufferers.

## Results

The results showed that most participants consider as problematic the relative's memory loss and struggles to communicate effectively and to handle his repetitive questions. Moreover, 37.5% declares that the management of the family member's inappropriate or aggressive behavior is often a source of discomfort and displeasure. Another major problem is the management of the sick during hygiene practices because of the refuse that generates stress and sense of failure. Almost 65% of the respondents feel tired or stressed, and about 35% believe they are doing something wrong or they don't do enough for his sick relative.

## Discussion

Caring for someone with dementia places a special burden on the caregiver, particularly with advancing illness and related cognitive and behavioral disorders. The large amount of care and supervision needed by sick causes stress and depression to caregivers.

## Conclusions

In conclusion, from the results emerges all the caregiver's suffering in seeing his own relatives with Alzheimer's dementia and the worry that they are not doing enough, despite their life being conditioned by taking care of their family members. It is clear that caregivers need a lot of support and that they deserve opportunities to learn and improve their ability to care for loved ones.

## References

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