



RESEARCH BRIEF

Study of Family Caregivers of Older Adults with Multiple Chronic Conditions (MCC)

KEY POINTS

- ✓ Caregiver's health matters as it impacts their quality of life & ability to provide care
- ✓ Caregiver's social location, conditioned by sex, age, education, & employment, impacts their health & the response to caregiving
- ✓ Strategies are needed to support caregivers, especially employed men and those who have little confidence in their ability to deal with difficult situations
- ✓ Caregiver-Employees (CEs), or caregivers who are also working, experience interferences at work due to their caregiving role; this is more likely for those who are employed full-time

What is the topic of this research?

Maintaining caregiver health is critical, yet we know little about how to sustain the health of caregivers, which is affected by social location. Social location refers to the multiple roles occupied by individuals at any given time, conditioned by sex, gender, age, education, income, employment status, culture, geography, social connectedness, & other determinants.

Research questions

How does social location (e.g., sex/gender, age, education, income, employment status, culture, geography, social connectedness) of family caregivers of older adults with MCC (specifically dementia, diabetes or stroke, in combination with other MCC) impact quality of life (QoL), self-efficacy & related outcomes over time?

How was the study done?

A total of 194 caregivers of older adults with MCC from Alberta and Ontario took part in up to 3 one-hour interviews. Survey data were collected at two time points, 6 months apart, to capture the active nature of caregiving for older persons with MCC. A small group of survey participants were invited to participate in a third conversational interview.

What did the researchers find?

- Even though there were many physical, mental, emotional &/or financial challenges faced by caregivers, they were able to find meaning in their caregiver role;
- As a result of their caregiving role, caregivers experienced impacts on their work, family & health;
- Age and gender both had a significant effect on caregiver burden. Employed men of all ages who reported some interference with their social activities experienced higher burden than other caregiver participants. This suggests that these caregivers need additional support;
- Self-efficacy, or confidence in one's ability to deal with difficult situations was found to be an important predictor of caregivers' QoL, physical & mental health;
- Caregivers' responses suggest that, in their caregiving journey, there were three phases: the initial phase was marked by caregivers feeling overwhelmed; the middle phase reflected adjustment & routine, and; the late phase revealed acceptance & confidence in the caregiving role;
- For caregiver-employees (CEs), or those caregivers who were also employed, those working full-time experienced more work interferences than those employed part-time/other (casual, reduced hours, etc.);
- The better the CE's physical health, the fewer the work interferences experienced.



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Who are the researchers?

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Key message

The significant positive relationship between self-efficacy & quality of life/health suggests the need to increase confidence in family caregivers' ability to deal with difficult situations. With respect to caregiver-employees, flexible caregiver-friendly workplace policies are needed to better manage work interferences, especially for those who are employed full-time.

Where do we go from here?

The findings of the study will be used to design ways to support family caregivers of persons with multiple chronic conditions, particularly for caregiver-employees, & employed men.



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