
CAREGIVING IN DEMENTIA AND IN OLD AGE DEPRESSION: PRELIMINARY RESULTS FROM THE 10/66 DRG PREVALENCE STUDY IN PORTUGAL

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Introduction

The burden of neuropsychiatric disorders in the elderly is high, considering patients, their families, and close or extended networks. In Portugal, the 10/66-Dementia Research Group population-based research programmes are running since 2011, with the community prevalence study. The protocol allows for valid diagnoses of dementia and depression, using comprehensive assessments which include the Geriatric Mental State-AGECAT.

Objectives and aims

We aimed to analyse informal caregiving arrangements and the psychological experience of caregiving in a subsample drawn from the ongoing 10/66 studies.

Methods

We report on 580 residents aged 65+ years of a defined catchment area in Portugal (Mora). Assessments included questionnaires on demographic and caregiving issues, the Self-Report Questionnaire (SRQ) on psychological distress and the Zarit Burden Interview (ZBI) on the caregiving experience.

Results

In this subsample, 94 participants were in need of informal caregiving (dementia accounted for 28 cases, depression for 31, and other chronic physical/psychiatric conditions for the remainder). Most primary caregivers were family relatives (mostly wives and daughters) and were living with the patient. A large number were elderly people themselves (mean age 64.1±16.3years). Median scores were 3 on the SRQ (range 0-16) and 8 on the ZBI (range 0-66). Those who were caring for participants with more severe disabilities scored significantly higher on both measures.

Conclusions

These preliminary results of the 10/66 epidemiological community studies support previous suggestions that caregiver strain is also high in subgroups of community samples. Most overburdened families (and individual caregivers) lacked appropriate, tailored interventions. Final results will be available soon.