

## GENERAL KNOWLEDGE OF HOME CARING FOR ELDERLY PATIENTS WITH DEMENTIA

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**Introduction:** Most elderly patients with dementia are cared for at their home by family members, usually elderly spouses.

**Objectives:** Important mission at associations for help at dementia is to facilitate public access to the most credible and up-to-date information on home caring of patients with dementia.

**Aims:** To determine how much Slovenian community health workers and other adults know about home caring of patients with dementia.

**Methods:** Hundred and twenty adult Slovenian e-mail users participated in a survey using a questionnaire consisting of 12 questions regarding dementia during May and August 2009. Questionnaires were filled-out by 60 community health workers (mean age = 40.00, SD = 11.77, range 22-67), and 60 other adults (mean age = 44.27, SD = 16.20, range 23-83;  $t = 1.651$ ;  $p > 0.05$ ).

**Results:** Community health workers were more knowledgeable and the other adults were the least knowledgeable on the subject of home caring of patients with dementia (3.03 v. 2.18,  $p < 0.01$ ). Differences in responses between community health workers in other adults are shown in order of significance:

- (a) finding help and professional support (49.6 % v. 35.6 %);
- (b) setting a positive mood of interaction (28.8% v. 33.9 %); and
- (c) responding with affection and reassurance (7.2 % v. 11.6 %).

**Conclusions:** Findings suggest that there appeared to be gaps in knowledge in dementia among the community health workers and general public. As care of elderly patients with dementia shifts into their home, education is needed to increase the public awareness of dementia.