

Profiles of social, cultural, and economic capital as longitudinal predictors of stress, positive experiences of caring, and depression among carers of people with dementia

Which aspects of life make a difference for carers?

We each have done different things in our lives. Some people spend longer studying, some do more years in work. There are differences in activities too: we might have hobbies, or visit family and friends. Our income is also important. We call these aspects of life resources.

We wanted to find out what types of resources carers of people with dementia have. In this case, we were looking at people who care for their wife or husband. We also wanted to find out whether those carers with more resources are less stressed and depressed, and report more positive experiences of caring.

Spousal carers of people with dementia told us about the resources they had. They also rated their level of stress and mood. Moreover, they told us about the good and bad aspects of being a carer. Carers answered the same questions again two more times one year apart.

Overall, carers rarely met up with friends and family but spoke with them on the phone. Carers' income was similar to what other people their age had.

Not everybody was the same. We found that carers could be placed into four groups.

The first group had very low social, cultural, and economic resources. The second group had low social, cultural, and economic resources. Both groups did not have much money to spend. The third group had very high social and cultural resources and plenty of money to spend. The fourth group had high social and cultural resources and enough money to spend.

Carers with fewer resources were slightly less stressed. They also reported more positive experiences of caring. However, they were more depressed.

We need to better help people who are caring for their spouses with dementia so they can have some time off from caring, meet friends, and pursue hobbies. This would help them to maintain good wellbeing.



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