

Promoting Caregiver Well-Being

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History of the UC San Diego Caregiver Project

- Early focus was on the emotional and physical consequences of caregiving
- Science had already shown that stress/distress was related to health problems (e.g., CVD; Hypertension)
- Our project focused on "why" the stress/distress led to those outcomes.
 - Caregivers have more active sympathetic nervous systems (SNS)
 - Active SNS can cause "sheer stress" which can cause higher coagulation molecules in the caregivers' systems
 - Wouldn't you know it, caregivers have higher levels of inflammation and coagulation molecules. These put caregivers at risk for CVD; hypertension

Caregiver Rates of Significant Symptoms of Depression

100.0%



Source: Resources for Enhancing Alzheimer's Caregiver Health (REACH)

Caregiving and CVD

- National REACH Study
 - > 800 caregivers from 6 U.S. cities
 - Followed for 18-months and inquired as to new diagnosis of CVD
 - Heart disease
 - Heart attack
 - Congestive heart failure
 - Angina
 - Myocardial infarction
 - Primary interest was to determine if stress and negative moods are related to CVD risk over 18-month period.

	Not Depressed	Depressed
Low Stress	Reference	
High Stress		

	Not Depressed	Depressed
Low Stress	Reference	
High Stress	83% increased risk	

	Not Depressed	Depressed
Low Stress	Reference	200% increased risk
High Stress	83% increased risk	



Source: Mausbach et al. (2007). Depression and distress predict time to cardiovascular disease in dementia caregivers. <u>Health Psychology</u>, 26, 539-544.

Current Focus of Caregiver Project

- Aid and support the caregiver in learning new coping skills
- 10 years of studying therapeutic approaches to helping caregivers learn these coping skills
- Now, we are focusing on mobile technology interventions
 - Can we deliver effective interventions to caregivers through the use of mobile technology?

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Leisure activities

Sitting around a fire Walking barefoot in the sand Reading the newspaper or magazine Davdreaming Going to a spa Telling and listening to jokes Listening to the sounds of nature Sunbathing Listening to music Breathing fresh air Subscribing to special magazine Sleeping late Writing in a journal or diary or keeping a scrapbook or photo album Being alone Taking a bubble bath or soothing bath Meditating or doing yoga Playing with or having a pet Having free time

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Hobbies, arts & crafts and the arts

Collecting things Woodworking or Carpentry Photography Restoring antiques or refinishing Furniture Needle work (knitting, crocheting, embroidery) Craft and art work (drawing, painting, sculpting, pottery, movie making) Dancing Singing Playing a musical instrument

Interactions with others or social activities

Leisure activities

- Select personally enjoyable activities from categories; or enter a custom/personal activity
- Select "candidate" activities to try for a week. Each activity has a "personal hearts" rating (from 1-5). The goal is to achieve 50 hearts during the first week

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- Each day, participants receive a text (at time of their choosing), asking them to report on their progress for the day
- Text contains a link to their personal portal
- Caregivers check off activities they achieved that day, or add personal activities they enjoyed (e.g., visit with granddaughter)
- The site tracks "hearts achieved", and every week shows progress regarding moods.

Thank You!

Information: 858-534-9479



CAREGIVER STUDY

