CASE WESTERN RESERVE UNIVERSITY
School of Medicine
Master of Public Health Program

Exploring Dementia Caregiver Self-Efficacy and Mental Health Through Research Synthesis and Public Health Communication

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BACKGROUND

- Behavioral and psychological symptoms of dementia (BPSD), including agitation, wandering, and resistance to care, create challenges for family caregivers[1].
- Family caregivers also manage complex medical and nursing tasks, often without formal training, contributing to caregiving strain[2].
- Caregiver self-efficacy — the confidence to manage caregiving challenges — is associated with mental health outcomes, including depressive symptoms[3].

POPULATION / SITE

- **Site:** Family Caregiving Translational Science Lab, Frances Payne Bolton School of Nursing, Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio.
- **Project:** Learning Skills Together (LST), a remotely delivered intervention study focused on strengthening dementia caregivers' confidence with complex care[4].
- **Population:** Family caregivers of persons living with dementia; the preliminary study infographic summarized data from 216 caregivers.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Analyze and interpret dementia caregiving research related to complex care, self-efficacy, and mental health.
2. Communicate research findings through accessible, audience-appropriate public health materials.
3. Collaborate with an interdisciplinary research team to support study implementation and dissemination.

ACTIVITIES & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Monitored LST intervention fidelity and documented adherence to study protocols.
- Supported participant communication, survey workflows, and secure research documentation using REDCap.
- Participated in interdisciplinary meetings to discuss study progress and emerging research findings.
- Reviewed preliminary caregiver data to identify patterns relevant to public health communication.
- Synthesized dementia caregiving literature and incorporated team feedback into research and dissemination materials.

DELIVERABLES

Deliverable 1: Participant / Community Infographic

LEARNING SKILLS TOGETHER

PRELIMINARY STUDY SNAPSHOT

Note from the Research Team

Thank you for being part of the Learning Skills Together study. This preliminary snapshot shares early information about the caregivers who participated and the types of support they provide for persons living with dementia (PLWD). These findings help us better understand caregivers' experiences and identify ways future programs can better support families managing daily care and complex health-related tasks.

WHO PARTICIPATED?

216 Caregivers participated in total with an average age of 65 years old.

White/Caucasian: **77.8%**
Black/African American: **9.7%**
Other race/ethnicity: **12.5%**

Prior healthcare work experience: **35.2%**

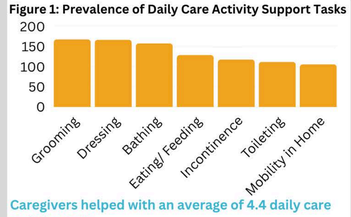
89.85% of participants were female.

WHO WERE CAREGIVERS SUPPORTING?

Participants reported:
Caring for spouse/domestic partner — **48.6%**
Caring for parent/parent-in-law — **44.4%**
Other relationship — **6.9%**
78.7% reported co-residing with their care recipient

DAILY CARE ACTIVITY SUPPORT

Figure 1: Prevalence of Daily Care Activity Support Tasks



Caregivers helped with an average of 4.4 daily care activity tasks.

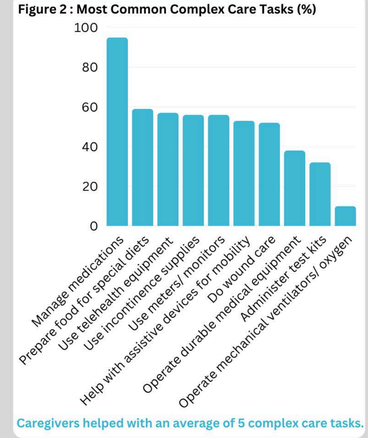
TIME SPENT CAREGIVING

Caregiving required significant time and skill. Participants spent an average of 72.8 hours per week providing care.

Participants also reported:
- Caregiving less than 1 year — 8.3%
- Caregiving 1–2 years — 25.9%
- Caregiving 3–5 years — 35.2%
- Caregiving more than 5 years — 30.6%

COMPLEX HEALTH CARE TASKS

Figure 2 : Most Common Complex Care Tasks (%)



Caregivers helped with an average of 5 complex care tasks.

Deliverable 2: Manuscript Introduction Synthesis

Dementia & BPSD	Complex Care	Self-Efficacy & Mental Health	Education & Skill Building	Research Gap
Progressive symptoms increase caregiving responsibilities and psychological strain	Medical and nursing tasks often exceed caregivers' formal preparation.	Greater caregiving confidence is associated with fewer depressive symptoms.	Practice, coaching, and feedback can strengthen caregiver confidence.	Complex-care self-efficacy remains understudied in the BPSD–depression relationship.

METHODS & RESULTS

Methods

- Synthesized peer-reviewed literature on dementia symptoms, complex care, caregiver self-efficacy, and mental health.
- Translated preliminary LST survey findings into accessible, participant-facing visual summaries.
- Refined research and dissemination materials through iterative feedback from interdisciplinary team members.

Results

- Developed a manuscript introduction establishing the evidence base and research gaps surrounding complex care, self-efficacy, and caregiver mental health.
- Created a participant-facing infographic summarizing preliminary characteristics and caregiving responsibilities among 216 LST participants.

LESSONS LEARNED

- **Evidence Synthesis:** Thorough literature review was essential to developing a cohesive, scientifically grounded manuscript.
- **Revision & Collaboration:** Adapting to iterative feedback was challenging but strengthened clarity, reduced redundancy, and alignment with the team's research narrative.
- **Audience Tailoring:** Beginning with plain language made adapting complex information for scientific and community audiences simpler.

PUBLIC HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

- Participant-facing infographics make preliminary research findings more accessible beyond academic audiences.
- Evidence synthesis helps identify research gaps and inform future caregiver-focused investigations.
- Audience-appropriate communication supports more inclusive and effective dissemination of dementia caregiving research.

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LEARNING SKILLS TOGETHER

References

[1] Crellin et al., *International Psychogeriatrics*, 2014; [2] Lee et al., *Journal of Clinical Nursing*, 2019; [3] Gallagher et al., *Aging & Mental Health*, 2011; [4] Meyer et al., *Trials*, 2024