

AGING RESEARCH SPOTLIGHT on CAREGIVERS



Dr. Matthias Hoben

Originally from Germany, Dr. Matthias Hoben completed training as a registered nurse. For several years, Hoben worked as a registered nurse in multiple care settings, including adult acute care, home care, long term care, and neurological rehabilitation. Throughout Hoben's career in research and practice, he has been passionate about improving the quality of care and quality of life for frail, older adults. This includes improving quality of work life for their professional caregivers as well as improving quality of life for their family/friend caregivers.

Caregivers' Concerns About Assisted Living Residents' Mental Health During the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Cross-Sectional Survey Study

Family or friend caregivers' concerns about assisted living (AL) residents' mental health are reflective of poor resident and caregiver mental health. COVID-19-related visiting restrictions increased caregiver concerns, but research on these issues in AL is limited. Using web-based surveys with 673 caregivers of AL residents in Western Canada, we assessed the prevalence and correlates of moderate to severe caregiver concerns about residents' depressed mood, loneliness, and anxiety in the 3 months before and after the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Results

Caregiver concerns doubled after the start of the pandemic (resident depressed mood: 23%–50%, loneliness: 29%–62%, anxiety: 24%–47%). Generalized linear mixed models identified various modifiable risk factors for caregiver concerns (e.g., caregivers' perception that residents lacked access to counseling services or not feeling well informed about and involved in resident care). These modifiable factors can be targeted in efforts to prevent or mitigate caregiver concerns and resident mental health issues. [Click here to read the article](#)

Prevalence and correlates of anxiety and depression in caregivers to assisted living residents during COVID-19: a cross-sectional study

Background

Family and friend caregivers play significant roles in advocating for and ensuring quality health and social care of residents in Assisted Living (AL) homes. However, little is known about how the COVID-19 pandemic and related visitor restrictions affected their health and mental well-being. We examined the prevalence and correlates of anxiety and depressive symptoms among caregivers of AL residents during the initial wave of COVID-19 in two Canadian provinces.

Methods

A cross-sectional web-based survey was conducted among family/friend caregivers of AL residents in Alberta and British Columbia (Oct 28, 2020—Mar 31, 2021) to collect data on their sociodemographic, health and caregiving characteristics, as well as concerns about residents' health and social care before and during the first wave of the pandemic. A clinically significant anxiety disorder and depressive symptoms were assessed with the GAD-7 and CES-D10 instruments, respectively. Separate multivariable (modified) Poisson regression models identified caregiver correlates of each mental health condition.

Results

Among the 673 caregivers completing the survey (81% for Alberta residents), most were women (77%), white (90%) and aged ≥ 55 years (81%). Clinically significant anxiety and depression were present in 28.6% and 38.8% of caregivers respectively. Both personal stressors (comorbidity level, income reduction, low social support) and caregiving stressors exacerbated by the pandemic were independently associated with caregiver anxiety and depression. The latter included increased concern about the care recipients' depression (adjusted risk ratio [adjRR] = 1.84, 95% confidence interval [CI] 1.19–2.85 for caregiver anxiety and adjRR = 1.75, 95% CI 1.26–2.44 for caregiver depressive symptoms) and reported intention to withdraw the resident from AL because of COVID-19 (adjRR = 1.24, 95%CI 0.95–1.63 for caregiver anxiety and adjRR = 1.37, 95%CI 1.13–1.67 for caregiver depressive symptoms).

Conclusions

Caregivers of residents in AL homes reported significant personal and caregiving-related stressors during the initial wave of COVID-19 that were independently associated with an increased likelihood of experiencing clinically significant anxiety and depressive symptoms. Healthcare providers and AL staff should be aware of the prevalence and varied correlates of caregivers' mental health during public health crises so that appropriate screening and support may be identified and implemented. [Click here to read the article](#)