

DISRUPTIONS TO CARE AND THE USE OF TELEHEALTH AMONG OLDER ADULTS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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Reports emerged early in the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic that older adults were foregoing non-COVID-19-related care, due to fears of contracting the virus during appointments and because of healthcare providers' reduced operations. Beginning in July, 2020, we explored the impact of the pandemic on disruptions to care and older adults' use of telehealth. Preliminary results from 53 older adults aged 66 to 93 (mean: 72.6) found that many older adults experienced disruptions in their care, ranging from 30-50% depending on the type of care. The most commonly disrupted care types were mental health and rehabilitation care (occupational, physical, or speech therapy), with 50% of older adults reporting disruptions to mental health and 50% to rehabilitation care. The most common reason for the disruptions was closed care providers' offices. Similar results were found for primary care (46% reporting disruptions), dental care (44%), and vision care (30%), with between 62-71% citing closed offices as a reason for the disruption. The use of telehealth among the sample was high (44%), and the majority (83%) of these older adults reported never having used it previously. All who used it reported being very or somewhat comfortable with the technology, and 83% said they would use it again even if in-person care was available. These findings suggest the pandemic has had a significant impact on older adults' care and that the expansion of telehealth could be increase access to care during and after the pandemic.

DUAL CAREGIVERS OF RELATIVES WITH DEMENTIA IN RURAL VIRGINIA: THE ADDED STRESS OF COVID-19

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Family caregivers often find themselves "sandwiched" between caring for an older relative with dementia (PWD) and another person. Serving in a dual caregiving role presents unique challenges and has consequences for caregivers' physical and mental health. Seven daily diary interviews with 46 dual dementia caregivers assessed their daily stressors and informal and formal supports. Results showed that dementia caregivers who also cared for another older relative reported poorer physical health and used more community-based services to care for the PwD. Conversely, dementia caregivers who also cared for younger relatives reported greater secondary stressors, lower family support, and use of fewer community-based services to care for the PwD. Since the COVID-19 pandemic began, two telephone interviews were conducted with 15 dual dementia caregivers. Caregivers were asked in-depth questions about how the pandemic had impacted their caregiving responsibilities, mental health, and use of community-based services. Guided

by stress process and behavior models, a thematic analysis of dual caregivers' interviews revealed that caregivers had less time for themselves, engaged in self-care activities less often, and felt their social life had suffered. Many of the caregivers reported feeling exhausted, stressed, and had more things to do than they could handle. Of the eight caregivers that used services before COVID-19, six experienced a change in services including loss of services, different workers, or self-selected cancellation of services. Discussion focuses on challenges dual dementia caregivers face and the added stressors they experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic.

EFFECTS OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON THE LIVED EXPERIENCE OF DIVERSE OLDER ADULTS LIVING ALONE WITH COGNITIVE IMPAIRMENT

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Background and Objectives: Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, older adults with cognitive impairment living alone (an estimated 4.3 million individuals in the United States) were at high risk for negative health outcomes. There is an urgent need to learn how this population is managing during the pandemic. **Research Design and Methods:** This is a qualitative study of 24 adults aged 55 and over living alone with cognitive impairment from diverse racial/ethnic backgrounds. Participants' lived experiences during the pandemic were elicited via 59 ethnographic interviews conducted over the phone either in English, Spanish, or Cantonese. Using a qualitative content analysis approach, interview transcripts and fieldnotes were analyzed to identify codes and themes. **Results:** Qualitative analysis of transcripts revealed five themes: 1) fear generated by the pandemic; 2) distress stemming from feeling extremely isolated; 3) belief in misinformation, 4) strategies for coping during the pandemic; and 5) the importance of access to essential services. **Discussion and Implications:** This pandemic put a spotlight on the precarity and unmet needs of older adults living alone with cognitive impairment living. Findings underscore the need to expand access to home care aides and mental health services for this population.

EVALUATING SERVICE-LEARNING WITH OLDER ADULTS ON UNDERGRADUATE COLLEGE STUDENTS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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Introduction: Students in the Frontiers in Human Aging course at UCLA participate in service-learning (SL) with older adults. In 2020, completion of SL coincided with the outbreak of the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. We evaluated the impact of SL on student attitudes on aging and community service in the context of the pandemic. **Methods:** Students were assigned to senior residential and daycare programs for 18-20 hours of SL. A retrospective pretest-posttest survey asked about attitudes and interests before and after SL and how the COVID-19 pandemic affected these perceptions; 73 (of 103) students responded.