**Influence of positive and negative dimensions of caring on carer well-being and satisfaction with life: Findings from the IDEAL study**

Carers are family members, friends, or other supporters who provide help and support to people with dementia. Carers will have different experiences of caring. Carers may find caring to be a positive and rewarding experience. Carers may also experience feelings of stress due to their caring role. In this study we explored how these positive and negative experiences of caring influence carers’ well-being and satisfaction with life.

For this study we used information collected from the IDEAL cohort. The IDEAL study follows a group of people with dementia and their carers over time, looking at what helps people to ‘live well’ with dementia. We used the information provided by 1283 carers who had taken part in the IDEAL study.

Carers completed questionnaires on well-being and satisfaction with life. They also completed questionnaires on:

* Whether they were experiencing any care-related **stress**
* Whether they were experiencing any feelings of **role captivity** (feeling trapped in their role as a carer)
* Their feelings of **competence** (or adequacy) in their role as a carer
* Whether they identified any **positive aspects of providing care**

We then analysed their answers to find out how carers’ experiences related to their well-being and satisfaction with life. Carers who had high levels of stress and felt trapped in their caring role had lower well-being and satisfaction with life. Carers who had low competence and identified fewer positive aspects of caring had lower well-being and satisfaction with life.

The findings show that carers’ positive and negative experiences of caring are important for their well-being and satisfaction with life. This helps us to understand the types of support that carers may find helpful. We need to recognise that caring can involve both positive and negative experiences. It is vital that carers are supported to reduce stress levels and feelings of being trapped in the caring role. Carers also need support to increase feelings of competence and positive feelings about caring.