



Health conditions in spousal caregivers of people with dementia and their relationships with stress, caregiving experiences, and social networks: longitudinal findings from the IDEAL programme

What difference do health problems make to carers of people with dementia?

Many older people support a spouse who is living with dementia. Caring in this way can be demanding, especially when carers have health problems themselves.

We wanted to find out more about these health problems and how they change over time. We also wanted to find out whether carers who are in poor health feel more stressed or have less contact with friends and family.

We spoke to over 900 people caring for spouses with dementia at home in Great Britain three times over a two-year period. They told us about their health, how stressed they felt, and how much contact they had with family and friends.

Most carers had one or two health conditions. This was the same for men and women, but older carers and carers who had less education had more health problems.

Having more health conditions went along with feeling more stressed. Over time, it meant people had less contact with friends and family.

Taking care of your own health while looking after a person with dementia can be challenging, but it is important for carers to look after their own health needs, and for health professionals to check up on carers' health.

This is a summary of a [research article](#) which was published in the **BMC Geriatrics** journal in February 2024.