

Relationship between depressive symptoms and capability to live well in people with dementia and their carers: results from the Improving the experience of Dementia and Enhancing Active Life (IDEAL) study

Depression is a common condition in people with dementia and can be treated with drugs, talking treatments or behavioural methods such as increasing pleasurable experiences.

Depression has a substantial impact on the capability to 'live well' in the person with dementia and may also affect their carer who provides practical or emotional support in daily life, and vice versa. By capability to live well we mean experiencing good quality of life, satisfaction with life and wellbeing. In this study, we investigated how depressive symptoms impacted on capability to live well in both people with dementia and their carers.

We found that higher levels of depressive symptoms in people with dementia impacted on both their own and the carer's capability to live well. Higher levels of depressive symptoms in the carer were also associated with lower capability to live well in themselves and the person with dementia. People with dementia who did not have a carer were more vulnerable to the impact of depressive symptoms than those with a carer.

Our findings suggest that depression does not just affect the person with the symptoms, but has a wider impact. Addressing depression in the person who has the symptoms, whether the person with dementia or carer, may also benefit their partner and improve quality of life and wellbeing for both.

This is a summary of a [research article](#) which appeared in the **Aging & Mental Health** journal in January 2021.