

Quality of life and well-being of carers of people with dementia: Are there differences between working and nonworking carers? Results from the IDEAL Programme

Do caregivers of people with dementia who were also in regular employment (paid or voluntary) feel they have better quality of life and well-being compared to nonworking caregivers? We asked 1239 spouse, relative and friend carers who took part in the IDEAL programme to self-rate their quality of life and well-being, and to comment on other factors like their caregiving experience and social support.

Our carers ranged in age from 26-96 years of age. Whatever their age, their gender, or their relationship to the care recipient (spouse, relative, friend), working carers reported higher quality of life score than carers who were not working. This may reflect the benefit of the sense of independence that supported work opportunities gives to carers.

Whether they were working or not working, carers who had a good self-esteem and had found ways to reduce their stress levels felt better about their quality of life and well-being. Carers who had good social support, and who felt positive about the care they were providing and their own competence in providing good care reported higher quality of life and well-being scores. This is one of the biggest surveys comparing working and nonworking carers in the UK. It has revealed the value of supported work opportunities for people caring for people with dementia. It has also provided a clear message on how we can support and improve the health and well-being of the hundreds of thousands of people providing informal care for their relatives, by helping them to keep connected, to value themselves, their own skills and the huge importance of that caring role.

This is a summary of a [research article](#) which appeared in the **Journal of Applied Gerontology** in May 2020.