

Prevalence and Risk Factors of Caregiver Dependence among Older Adults in a Southeast Asian Population

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Abstract

Introduction: Currently very little is known about the prevalence or magnitude of caregiver dependence in Singapore and thus, there is a need to fill this gap in this multiethnic ageing population. This study aims to determine the prevalence and risk factors of caregiver dependence among older adults in Singapore. **Materials and Methods:** Data were used from the Well-being of the Singapore Elderly (WiSE) study, a nationally representative, cross-sectional survey among Singapore residents aged 60 years and above. Caregiver dependence was ascertained by asking the informant (the person who knows the older person best) a series of open-ended questions about the older person's care needs. **Results:** The older adult sample comprised 57.1% females and the majority were aged 60 to 74 years (74.8%), while 19.5% were 75 to 84 years, and 5.7% were 85 years and above. The prevalence of caregiver dependence was 17.2% among older adults. Significant sociodemographic risk factors of caregiver dependence included older age (75 to 84 years, and 85 years and above, $P < 0.001$), Malay and Indian ethnicity ($P < 0.001$), those who have never been married ($P = 0.048$) or have no education ($P = 0.035$), as well as being homemakers or retired ($P < 0.001$). After adjusting for sociodemographic variables and all health conditions in multiple logistic regression analyses, dementia ($P < 0.001$), depression ($P = 0.011$), stroke ($P = 0.002$), eyesight problems ($P = 0.003$), persistent cough ($P = 0.016$), paralysis ($P < 0.001$), asthma ($P = 0.016$) and cancer ($P = 0.026$) were significantly associated with caregiver dependence. **Conclusion:** Various sociodemographic and health-related conditions were significantly associated with caregiver dependence. Dependent older adults will put greater demands on health and social services, resulting in greater healthcare expenditures. Hence, effective planning, services and support are crucial to meet the needs of dependent older adults and their caregivers.

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