

CAREGIVER NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2020



CAREGIVING & SLEEP DEPRIVATION Part 1

Why are caregivers of persons diagnosed with Alzheimer's Disease [AD] and/or other dementias at risk of sleep deprivation?

One reason is that changes in their loved ones sleeping patterns keep them up at night. According to the National Sleep Foundation at www.sleepfoundation.org: "With AD the loss of brain tissue that leads to loss of mental abilities may also disrupt the sleep/wake cycle, which may cause sleep problems, nighttime wandering, and agitation."

"The amount of sleep disruption in AD patients usually depends on the stage of their disease. Patients in the early stages of AD may sleep more than usual or wake up disoriented. As the disease progresses, patients may begin to sleep during the day and awaken frequently throughout the night."

"Patients with more advanced AD rarely sleep for long periods. Rather, they doze irregularly throughout the day and night. Circadian rhythms - daily cycling of body temperature, sleep, wakefulness, and metabolism - are sometimes disrupted in older adults. Evidence suggests that these disruptions may be worse in patients with AD and that AD patients may lose the ability to stay asleep or keep alert as the disease progresses. Sleep problems may also increase agitation among AD patients, according to the results of at least one study."

"Another feature of AD is 'sundowning,' a term used to describe an increase in agitated behavior that occurs in the evening. This increased agitation may be explained by sleepiness or it may be that agitated behavior is more troublesome to caregivers after sun down. Whatever their causes, agitation and sleep problems result in severe stress for caregivers and are among the top reasons AD patients are given care in nursing homes instead of at home."

AD may also be linked genetically with obstructive sleep apnea (OSA). In a recent study, researchers at Stanford University Medical Center found that a gene associated with OSA is also associated with a higher risk of AD and other chronic illnesses such as heart disease. These results highlight the complexity of AD and shed light on the need to treat the range of symptoms associated with it in order to offer patients the best possible quality of life."

*"The heart
that loves is
always young."*

Greek Proverb



In This Issue

- Changes in sleep patterns for persons diagnosed with AD
- Caregiver-specific causes for sleep deprivation
- Current and new support group information
- Upcoming Events

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Why are caregivers of persons diagnosed with Alzheimer's Disease [AD] and/or other dementias at risk of sleep deprivation? [continued]

Another reason is that, according to the Family Caregiver Alliance (<https://www.caregiver.org>), "Caregivers often find themselves exhausted at the end of the day, but many are still not able to sleep. Varying studies have documented that approximately 70% of caregivers for people with dementia report sleep problems, 60% report sleeping less than 7 hours, and 10-20% use alcohol to go to sleep and/or sleep medication. In data collected by the California Caregiver Resource Centers, 41% of caregivers said they are awakened during the night by the care receiver. These same caregivers also scored higher on the depression screening."

"Insomnia comes in several forms—trouble falling asleep (more than 30 minutes), trouble falling back asleep after waking at night (e.g. to use the bathroom or care for someone else), waking up early and not being able to fall back asleep, or waking up not feeling refreshed. People with depression and anxiety also have a higher incidence of insomnia."

There are many contributors to insomnia including:

- Caregiver role strain/stress, other stressful life events, trauma
- Eating too much or too late in the evening
- Many medications and medical conditions can interfere with sleep
- Sleep-related disorders like sleep apnea and restless legs syndrome can also affect falling and staying asleep
- Caffeine, nicotine, and alcohol are well-known sleep adversaries
- Other factors that change during life such as activity levels, hormonal changes, injuries and/or sustained pain i.e. arthritis, schedule changes due to shift changes at work, traveling or retirement, etc.

In the March 2020 Caregiver Newsletter, the effects of sleep deprivation and tips to help caregivers and their loved ones sleep better will be explored.



By Denise Kee-White, LCSW

Support Groups and Upcoming Events

All ONEgeneration Caregiver Support Groups are free and held at ONEgeneration JOY Center
17400 Victory Blvd Van Nuys, 91406
818.708.6625

Caregiver Support Group

Saturday March 7th from 1:30pm to 3pm
Tuesdays February 18th, and March 3rd and 17th from 3:00pm-4:30pm

Grupo de Apoyo al Cuidador Español

Miércoles:
26 de Febrero
25 de Marzo
22 de Abril

Para más información, llame a Denise Kee-White 818.708.6376, y una persona que habla Español le va a contactar.

****New** Men's Caregiver Support Group**
Meet with husbands, sons, and other male relative caregivers to discuss the day to day challenges that arise from the stress of caring for a loved one. Group will be facilitated by Sig Diamond, Counselor, and will be held the 2nd Wednesday of every month-upcoming dates are March 11th, April 8th, and May 13th at 3:00pm.



Diabetes Wound Care Workshop

Tuesday February 25, 2020

3:00pm to 4:00pm at the JOY Center

Please join us for a free workshop. Adults, and older adults with diabetes need to take special care to check for wounds and sores. Caregivers of loved ones with diabetes find that impaired wound healing from diabetes, along with any memory impairments, present unique challenges to wound care.

Learn how diabetes affects wound healing, how to treat a diabetic wound and why glycemic control is important.

Please RSVP by calling ONEgeneration at 818.708.6625 or by emailing aswift@onegeneration.org