

Taking into consideration carers's health: a multidisciplinary approach required

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Resume of the survey

More than 13% of the population in France are carers, and, often, through overinvestment and lack of time, the health of carers is sidelined. Faced with this societal issue, the subject of their health takes a significant importance. We absolutely need to understand the impact that caring role has on carers to help them staying in good health (physically, psychologically and socially).

Objectives :

- Understand how taking care of a relative can alter the health of the carer
- Observe how professionals take into account the carers's health
- Raise awareness about carer's health to health and social professionals and to give them advices
- Support carers according to their health needs

Methodology :

We lead this survey with semi-structured interviews in 5 localities : 15 carers, 23 professionals (health/social) , 5 institutional actors involved and a quantitative survey at national level to 200 carers.

Outcomes :

Carers who claim their place as relatives

Many carers report fragile health and difficult relationships with professionals. They regret the lack of consideration.

48% of carers report having health problems which they did not have before becoming carers

50% of carers do not talk about the difficulties associated with their caring role with health professionals

Professionals raised but deprived

Health and medico-social professionals explain that they have little knowledge of local support for carers. We observed that carers's personal situation is identified often too informally, within adapted tools and a major difficulty for professionals is finding their rightful place with regard to carers.

Institutional actors: an awareness to be realized

Institutional actors have shown a limited vision of stakeholders present locally. This lack of knowledge can be a detrimental factor towards the effective implementation of local policies for carers. While they clearly appear to have identified the issue of support for carers, its implementation remains to be developed.

The information gathered determines the path that remains to be taken in order to look better after carers and their health and to improve professional practices. For this purpose, tools have been created, for carers (to help them find good interlocutors), and for professionals (proposing tools and ways to support and take into account carers and their health).

References/resources:

- Direction de la Recherche, des Études, de l'Évaluation et des Statistiques (DREES), Ministère de la Santé, « Enquête Handicap Santé, Volet aidants informels (HSA) » - 2008
- Haute Autorité de Santé (HAS), « Maladie d'Alzheimer et maladies apparentées : suivi médical des aidants naturels » - 2010
- Tools for carers (to find themselves interlocutors to privilege) :
http://www.aidants.fr/sites/default/files/public/Pages/aidants_depliant_8pages-aidants_web.pdf
- Tools for professionals (ways to support and take into account carers and their health):
http://www.aidants.fr/sites/default/files/public/Pages/aidants_livretpro_vd.pdf