

## The Effect of Dementia on Family Members

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**Abstract :** The study aims to understand the effects of dementia on family members. The primary objectives of this research are to identify the main reasons for dementia among the elderly, understand the struggles and stigmas faced by the family members, and understand the effects of dementia on family members. The research employs a qualitative method and utilizes unstructured interviews with family members, counselors and caregivers. A descriptive research design is employed, and thematic analysis is used to analyze the data. A total of 17 family members in the age group of 54-69 years were interviewed, along with 2 counselors and 2 caretakers. In understanding dementia, the researcher has reviewed articles, and the studies revealed diverse meanings, symptoms, stages attached to dementia, and the complex interplay of protective and risk factors for dementia. However, in understanding dementia and its effects on families, there is a lack of studies in relation to the significant effects of dementia on family members and their role as primary caregivers. Therefore, an attempt has been made to understand the effects of dementia on family members, along with ways to improve dementia care for family members. The purpose of the study was to understand the effects and challenges of dementia on family members, the psychosocial reasons for dementia among the elderly, and the various struggles and stigmas faced by the family members of dementia patients. The major findings of the study indicate that people with dementia are cared for by family members at home. Dementia has a significant impact on family members. Family member's quality of life is affected; they experience feelings of anxiety, stress, irritation, frustration, and fear as they watch their loved ones struggle with dementia. They also experience financial strain, as dementia care, medication, and therapy are expensive. Another common impact is the role reversal of family members for their loved ones with dementia. There is a lack of awareness and social understanding about dementia, which leads to family members experiencing stigma and struggles. Caregivers are unable to take care of themselves, and many times, the primary caregiver, a spouse who is elderly, experiences acute stress and a physical inability to meet the demands of being a caregiver. Strategies to improve dementia care are understanding dementia, being patient with the person, showing love and care for the person, avoiding provoking the person, distracting them, offering reassurance, playing their favorite music, talking about things they love, going through old memories, following a structured routine, and remaining calm. The study has made an attempt to provide strategies to manage dementia care, understanding the struggles family members go through, and raising awareness about dementia that will enable further research and investigations.

**Keywords :** elderly, dementia, stigma, family members

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