

# The unmet needs of carers in the australian society today literature review

[Parts of the World](#), [Australia](#)



## **Abstract**

The main purpose of this paper is to discuss how care responsibilities in the continent of Australia are affecting the lives of the carers in a negative manner. The impact of the burden of care is acute on the mental, physical and economic state of the carers. Mental illness may even be an outcome of this burden. The families of the carers are also being affected in the process. Most Australians have to undertake caring responsibilities at some point in their lives. The extent and type of care usually depends on the nature of the family. Care in Australia can be offered in both informal and formal settings. In the latter, the people are employed in various sectors of the industry such as health, child care, community services while in the former case, care is provided by friends or relatives. The carers prove to be extremely helpful to the persons in need for care and so, the demand for caregivers in Australia is on the rise due to the ageing population and low levels of fertility.

People in Australia usually balance their role as caregivers with several other responsibilities. For the greater part of their lives, they carry the burden of significant caring responsibilities, even though the personal cost is high. One cannot undermine the impact of caring on the caregivers and their families. Caring is likely to have a noticeable effect on the emotional, physical and financial state of the carers as well as their families. It can result in mental illness and even the breakdown of important relationships .

There are numerous carers in Australia who provided help to those in need of assistance due to old age or disability. The gender disparity in the profession is rather high with more women accepting the role of carers than men. But the position of a carer is both demanding and challenging. Caring for friends

or family members who suffer from disability or happen to be frail aged has a considerable impact on the lives of the carers. The nature and extent of the impact may vary based on the type of relationship between the carer and the individual requiring care, the care arrangement situation, along with the availability of support services. Most of the carers live with the main recipient of care. In case of such people, their role as carers takes a massive toll on their personal lives.

When caring for someone else, the finances of a person suffer owing to limited job opportunities as well as low income rates. Carers who are of working age have a lesser chance than non caregivers to become a part of the labor force, mostly due to the constraints of time. This is more pronounced in case of people who are responsible for individuals who are severely restricted in their daily activities. Most primary carers limit their standard working hours after they assume caring responsibilities while others take time off paid work on a more ad hoc level .

One of the ideal ways through which young carers are able to maintain their connection to the labor force is working part-time. Some carers even want to increase their level of participation in the labor force . Due to low levels of employments, carers in Australia earn less and possess lower standards of living than persons involved in other occupations. The families of the caregivers suffer from increased economic hardship due to the lower income level.

Caring responsibilities impose a considerable burden on the carers in matters of time. Carers have to maintain their role for several years and often for several hours in a day. Some carers find it impossible to leave the

care recipient unattended for even a few minutes without any difficulty.

Caring happens to be a long-term commitment for many carers. More than third of all the carers in Australia have offered care to a disabled person for a period of ten years or more .

One of the most significant impacts that caring responsibilities have on the lives of the carers is the deterioration of physical health. The emotional, mental and physical wellbeing and health of a person can suffer due to their caring responsibilities. The situation can be aggravated in cases where caring occurs for a prolonged time period . Carers suffer from the lowest wellbeing index score for any sizeable group in Australia, with their health level decreasing as the number of hours they spend caring increases.

The carers and their families may have a greater rate of mental health problems than the general population. Female carers are more likely to experience clinical depression than male carers. The challenges and strains handled by carers on a daily basis may also have a considerable impact on the health of other members of the family. Sometimes, parents, partners and even children may have a depressive episode within six months of beginning care. In case of many carers, their caring responsibilities happen to be motivated by a distinct sense of commitment to the family. However, they also need to take care of their own wellbeing and ensure that they have sufficient support for their career .

The burden of the carers in some cases may lead to the psychological and behavioral symptoms characterizing dementia. The responsibilities of the carers have been found to be considerably lower among carers who are in charge of people with physical impairment in comparison to people who

have to take care of individuals with memory loss or cognitive impairment. Depression in case of such carers suffering from psychiatric disorder is often mediated through the presence of a carer confidante . Comprehensive diagnosis of the condition of the carers seems to have a positive impact on their state and succeeds in reducing the burden of the carers.

The Australian Government offers assistance to carers via a number of programs like the Dementia Education and Support Program, the Early Stage Dementia Support and Respite Project, the national network of Commonwealth Carer Resource Centers and the Commonwealth Carer Respite Centers and the Carer Information and Support Program. The government of Australia feels that it is important to increase the level of awareness of the support programs as well as the entry points of community care if formal services are to play a vital role in early intervention and coordinated support for rising number of people who are accepting the role of carers .

It is often seen that the strain is too much for some carers in Australia and these individuals turn to respite care for the disabled and aged individuals in their care when they feel like taking a break. The respite care staff ensures that all the responsibilities of the carers are handled in an effective manner and the carers do not suffer from more stress when they return home.

Respite care is best for maintaining aged individuals in the community for an extended period of time. Some carers feel like using respite care as sort of a trial basis so it is important that the respite care experience is a positive one .

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