Strain Among Caregivers of Older Adults Diagnosed With Breast Cancer

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OBJECTIVES: To illustrate the predictors of strain among caregivers of older adults diagnosed with breast cancer.

SAMPLE & SETTING: This study involved 39 women diagnosed with breast cancer who were aged 69 years or older, receiving any type of treatment, and seeking an initial assessment in a geriatric oncology program at a large cancer center in the midwestern United States and their caregivers.

METHODS & VARIABLES: This cross-sectional study evaluated relationships among the variables of caregiver strain, age, employment status, patient characteristics, and patient scores on the comprehensive geriatric assessment. Bivariate statistics and logistic regression models were used.

RESULTS: Increasing age of the caregiver was associated with less caregiver strain. Caregivers employed part-time experienced greater strain than those employed full-time.

IMPLICATIONS FOR NURSING: Nurses must assess for strain in caregivers of individuals diagnosed with cancer, particularly if they are younger and employed part-time. Caregivers of depressed patients should be assessed for strain and offered support.

KEYWORDS caregiver strain; caregiver burden; comprehensive geriatric assessment; cancer

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