

## **Service Needs of Caregiver's of Recently Discharged Older Adults**

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**Objective:** Patients who are discharged home after a hospital stay have a 9 to 20% increased readmission risk when compared to patients who are discharged to a facility. Readmission rates are higher for elders whose caregivers are poorly prepared, who lack social services, and depressed. Stressed caregivers can negatively affect patient rehabilitation outcomes. 1) To determine which social and health services are needed by caregivers of recently discharged older adults. 2) To determine which services affect caregiver burden, depression, and caregiver-care recipient relationship quality.

**Methods:** Thirty caregivers of adults aged 55 and older hospitalized with a non-terminal illness, but who required long-term care post hospital discharge were interviewed. Caregivers participated in a 30 minute interview. The interview included questions on sociodemographics, health, emotional well-being, and social service needs.

**Results:** Thirteen men and seventeen women, with an average age of 63 were interviewed. Service needs positively correlated with increased caregiver burden were lack of transportation, healthcare, and dental care. Additionally, a need for socialization, medication monitoring, and respite increased caregiver burden. Depression was positively correlated with dental care and respite needs. Caregiver-care recipient relationship and informal social support were not correlated with any service needs.

**Conclusion:** Caregiver burden and depression increase with unmet social service and healthcare needs. Informal support does not decrease social and healthcare needs, nor does informal support reduce caregiver burden and depression. Caregivers of recently discharged older adults face increased caregiving demands. Meeting the care recipient's social and health service needs may reduce caregiver burden and depression.