

Territorial and Gender Differences in the Home Care of Family Members with Dementia

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ABSTRACT

The increasing prevalence of dementia is threatening the capacity of health and social service systems to provide long-term care support at the territorial level. In both rural and urban areas, specific family members (gendered care) are responsible for the daily care of their relatives. The aim of this work is to explore gender and territorial implications in the provision of in-home care by family members. To this end, family caregivers in Navarre, Spain, were administered the Psychosocial Adjustment to Illness Scale (PAIS-SR) and a semi-structured interview. The results show the good psychosocial adjustment of caregivers of relatives with dementia but the negative impacts of care giving in the domestic, relational and psychological domains. Moreover, the feminization of psychological distress was found to predominate in rural areas since mainly women are responsible for instrumental and care tasks, while men seek other complementary forms of support. Place of residence (rural vs. urban) was found to exert a strong effect on the respondents' conception, life experience and provision of care. Consequently, territorial and gender differences in coping with and adjusting to care require the design of contextualized actions adapted to caregivers' needs.

Keywords: Family caregiver, Dementia, Psychosocial adjustment, Rural-urban spaces, Gender, Aging, Navarre

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