

ADULTS EXPERIENCING EXTREME STRESS AS CAREGIVERS TO ELDERLY PARENTS



More than 75 million adults born between the years 1946 and 1964 (commonly referred to in the U.S.A. as “baby boomers” or the “sandwich generation”) are juggling work, children and care for aging parents. The emotional and physical burden puts them at an increased risk of chronic illness, decreased emotional health and well-being, and substance abuse. There is a heightened awareness to the caregiving crisis, yet much work remains to be done at both national and state levels.

A LACK OF RESOURCES FOR CAREGIVERS

According to a June 2011 *MetLife Study of Caregiving Costs to Caregivers*, policymakers should propose expanding paid family and medical leave to all states. This would benefit working caregivers who need to take a leave of absence to care for aging parents, while allowing them to sustain or improve their own quality of life.¹

The *MetLife* study also reported nearly 10 million American adults over the age of 50 who work and provide care to a parent are more likely to have fair or poor health, compared to those who do not provide care to their parents.¹ This is due to the increase in responsibilities a caregiver takes on, serving numerous roles such as: companionship, helping with household tasks, handling bills, personal care, and serving as an advocate for their loved ones when coordinating medical care and support.



FEMALES MAKE UP 70 PERCENT OF CAREGIVERS

A new study published in a recent issue of *The New England Journal of Medicine* assessed the impact of caregiving on caregivers’ well-

More than half of the caregivers had HIGH LEVELS OF DEPRESSION.

being and quality of life. Researchers at the University of Toronto followed a group of 280 caregivers of critically ill family members for a 12-month period. The average age of the caregivers was 53; 70 percent of the caregivers were female and 61 percent were caring for a spouse.²

DEPRESSED BEGINNING OF STUDY

67%

DEPRESSED AFTER 1-YEAR FOLLOW UP

43%

The results showed that more than half of the caregivers had high levels of depression; 67 percent were depressed at the start of the study and 43 percent were depressed

after the one-year follow up. One of the most important findings was the ongoing risk of clinical depression for caregivers even years after the crisis was over. The study also concluded by stating there is currently a lack of resources for caregivers.²

BABY BOOMERS FEELING THE BURNOUT

Boomer caregivers must become more self-aware of their own health and well-being. It’s easy to forget preventative care appointments when caring for others, but caregivers need to get adequate sleep, nutrient-rich foods, water and exercise. Often they feel the burden of being “sandwiched” in between caring for their parent and their own children, and do not have enough time for themselves.

According to *American Society on Aging*, the highest rates of emotional burden and the deepest levels of depression are felt by caregivers who experience entrapment—a sense of powerlessness, loneliness and suffering associated with long periods of caregiving of the most difficult elders.³

Maintaining care for two generations of families simultaneously will ultimately end in burnout. Caregivers can find strategies for coping by following these tips:

- **Don't go at it alone.** Let friends and neighbors help out with cooking and errands, or find a local support group. Schedule a regular routine with a friend such as meeting for exercise, coffee or a movie once a week. Know when to ask for help.
- **Plan ahead.** Talk with loved ones about their wishes for care while they are still in good health. Plan out their finances, draw up "advance directive" documents, and put all verbal talks in writing with an appointed Power of Attorney.



- **Make yourself a priority.** When caregivers take care of their own needs (sleep, exercise, socializing and spiritual needs) the person cared for will benefit as well. Don't underestimate the physical and psychological advantages of self-care and the resources available to combat stress.

CORTISOL AND STRESS

What causes stress? A hormone called cortisol can wreak havoc on your body and produce undesirable levels of strain that take a physical and emotional toll. While cortisol is a necessary component for our body to function, too much sends our emotions into overdrive. We experience anxiety, panic and debilitating levels of anxiety. All of the LifePharm Products are beneficial stress busters.

LAMININE



Laminine can help lower the body's cortisol levels, thereby reducing the amount of stress that can negatively plague our emotions. Dr. Bjoedne Eskeland conducted a study that showed an average 23 percent reduction of cortisol levels in individuals after 12 days of consistent consumption of Laminine. When healthy levels of cortisol are maintained, serotonin levels (the happy hormone) are regulated. The result is a more balanced state of mind and emotional stability.

IMMUNE+++



Stress or hopelessness of the mind (studies from psycho-neuro-immunology) affects the nerves that connect to the immune system, putting us at an increased risk for illness. IMMUNE+++ has many benefits in supporting the immune system in addition to helping balance stress levels. The herbs and ingredient blends that make up IMMUNE+++ are called adaptogens. In traditional Indian and Chinese medicine these herbs are known to provide energy to the body. Ashwagandha and the powerful Adaptogenic mushroom blend in IMMUNE+++ have benefits for rejuvenation, energy, stress relief, anxiety and support of restful sleep.

DIGESTIVE+++

DIGESTIVE+++ supports the integrity of the gut lining, keeping the flora-producing positive neurochemicals that we now know show an effect on mood.⁴



OMEGA+++



OMEGA+++ contains the omega 3, 6 and 9 fatty acids, which have been studied for their positive effects on helping with mild depression and mood support. OMEGA+++ provides sensitive nerves and brain cells the omega-3 fatty acids need to function optimally.

Remember to take all LifePharm supplements daily to keep your body nourished. Support your loved ones by encouraging them to do the same.

Watch LifePharm Research Scientist Dr. Andujar Discuss the LifePharm Powerhouse Products



These statements have not been evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration. This product is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure or prevent any disease.

REFERENCES

1. Tanya Phelps. Baby Boomer Caregivers: Need to Protect Their Own Health, Wealth. Ensocare Care Coordination Solutions Trends Reports. April 14, 2016.
2. Leo Newhouse, LICSW, Contributor. The (Not-So-Hidden) Costs of Caregiving. The Harvard Health Blog. June 30, 2016.
3. Henry Moss. American Society on Aging. October 21, 2013.
4. Dinan TG1, Cryan JF. Melancholic microbes: a link between gut microbiota and depression? *Neurogastroenterol Motil.* 2013 Sep;25(9):713-9.