Cultural Task Difficulties and Negative Consequences for Caregivers From Diverse Communities

Rachel Schaffer, David Bass, and Sara Powers

Benjamin Rose Institute on Aging

Jenna McDavid and Ocean Le

Diverse Elders Coalition and Benjamin Rose Institute on Aging conduct a national survey of family and friend caregivers from diverse racial, ethnic, and sexual orientation backgrounds.

Diverse Elders Coalition Member Organizations:
- National Asian Pacific Center on Aging (NAPCA)
- National Hispanic Council on Aging (NHCOA)
- National Indian Council on Aging, Inc. (NICOA)
- SAGE
- Southeast Asian Resource Action Center (SEARAC)
- National Caucus and Center on Black Aging, Inc. (NCCA)

Research Question
Is there a relationship between perceived difficulties performing cultural tasks (i.e., immigration issues and language barriers) and a various negative and positive caregiver outcomes?

Survey Description and Sample

Caregiver Survey:
- Cross-sectional
- Anonymous
- Print and online versions available in 8 languages
- Guided by Stress Process Model
- Convenience sample - newsletter, website and social media ads, community events participants, senior center participants

Eligible Caregivers
- Providing ongoing unpaid help to a relative or friend ≥55 years of age
- Assistance because of ongoing health problems or disabilities
- Living in the US

Survey Participants
- Total survey responses = 840
- Analysis sample = 389, includes caregivers who self-identify as: Chinese Americans (n=101), Southeast Asian Americans (n=148), Hispanic/Latino Americans (n=94), and Multiple Ethnicities (n=45)

Sample Background Characteristics

Table 1. Mean/Percent for Covariates in Multivariate Analyses

Table 4. Statistically Significant (p < .05) Regression Coefficients for the Association of Cultural Task Difficulties and Eight Caregiver Outcomes

Caregiver Outcomes
- Isolation
- Health Strain
- Relationship Strain
- Work Strain
- Depression
- Quality Care Receiver Healthcare
- Satisfaction Care Receiver Family/Friend Support
- Satisfaction Caregiver Family/Friend Support

Standardized Regression Coefficients
- Isolation: .18
- Health Strain: .19
- Relationship Strain: .16
- Work Strain: .24
- Depression: .30
- Quality Care Receiver Healthcare: -.18
- Satisfaction Care Receiver Family/Friend Support: -.15
- Satisfaction Caregiver Family/Friend Support: -.18

Cultural Task Difficulties

3 item index
- Legal issues related to immigration or naturalization procedures
- Translating health-related information into their main language
- Overcoming language barriers when talking with healthcare or other service providers

Response Options
- 0 = No difficulty, 1 = Some difficulty, 2 = Great deal of difficulty

Table 2. Descriptive Data on Cultural Task Difficulties: Key Independent Variable Used in Multivariate Analyses

Table 3. Descriptive Data on Eight Caregiver Outcomes Used as Dependent Variables in Multivariate Analyses

Analytic Strategy
- Multiple regression analysis with each outcome as dependent variable
- Association of cultural task difficulties and each outcome is estimated controlling for background characteristics
- Conditional means for respondents with high vs. low scores for cultural task difficulties estimated for each outcome to illustrate statistically significant multivariate results

Multivariate Analysis

- Caregivers reports of difficulties assisting their relative or friend with cultural tasks are consistently related to all 8 caregiver outcomes.
- Associations between cultural task difficulties are of moderate size and are statistically independent of various background and health characteristics.
- More cultural task difficulties are associated with higher levels of four types of caregiver strain and symptoms of depression; and lower levels of satisfaction with the quality of healthcare and support from family members and friends.

Conclusion and Implications

- Comparison of caregivers who report high vs. low levels of cultural task difficulties illustrate statistically significant regression results, although without the benefits of statistical controls.
- Caregivers with high compared to low cultural task difficulties have 20% to 54% higher scores on caregiver strain and depression.
- Caregivers with high compared to low cultural task difficulties have 7% to 13% lower scores on satisfaction with the quality of healthcare and satisfaction with family and friend support.

Funder
The John A. Hartford Foundation, based in New York City, is a private, non-partisan philanthropy dedicated to improving the care of older adults. Established in 1929, the Foundation has three priority areas: creating age-friendly health systems, supporting family caregiving, and improving serious illness and end-of-life care. For more information, visit www.johnahartford.org and follow @johnhartford.