

AUTHORS

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CONTEXT

COVID-19 pandemic and the public health protocols have increased the demands of care on FCGs. Prior to the pandemic 43% of family caregivers [FCGs] were lonely and 33% were anxious. There are robust associations between extent of caregiving, stress, anxiety, and loneliness, and poor health.

OBJECTIVE

The aim of this study was to assess the effects of COVID-19 pandemic on Alberta FCGs in terms of care work, anxiety, and loneliness and impact on health.

DESIGN

A cross-sectional, online survey was conducted on the REDCap data collection platform. The survey captured caregiving hours, anxiety [State Anxiety Scale] and loneliness [DeJong-Gierveld Loneliness Scale], retrospectively [Jan 2020] and at the time of the survey (July 2020). We used descriptive statistics, χ^2 , and paired-samples T-tests to examine the data.

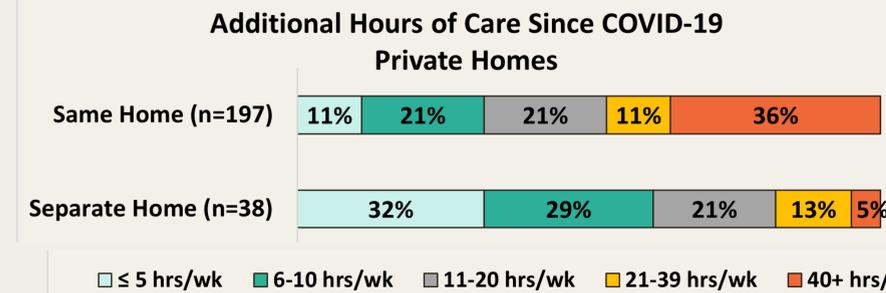
PARTICIPANTS

604 FCGs completed the survey. 85% were female.

A TALE OF TWO SOLITUDES EXPERIENCED BY ALBERTA FAMILY CAREGIVERS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

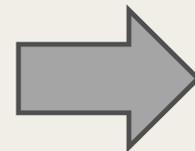


Private homes: Overwhelmed by providing care



Congregate Care: Unable to provide personal or emotional care

Both Solitudes Increased
Anxiety & Loneliness



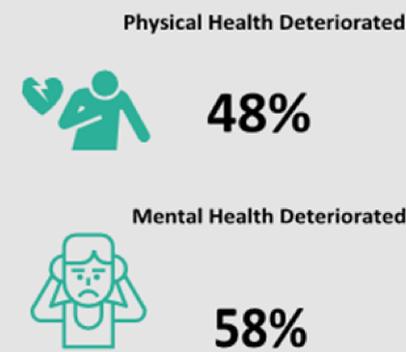
Negative Impacts on Health
and Wellness During COVID-19



78% were Anxious since COVID-19*
*(State Anxiety Scale Tluczek)



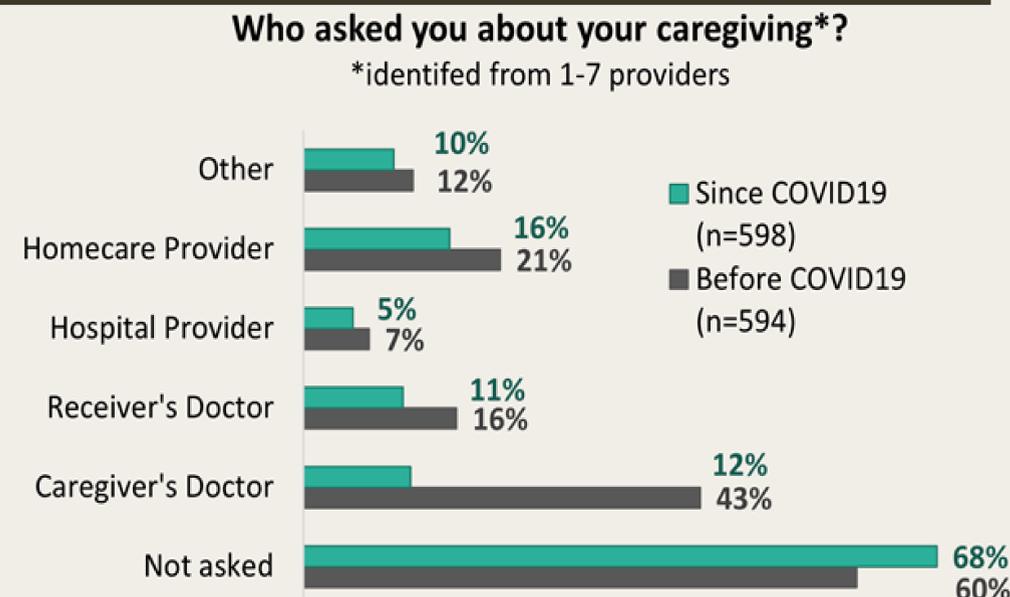
86% are Lonely since COVID-19**
(DeJong Gierveld Loneliness Scale)



Are health providers asking caregivers about their caregiving situation?

40% Before COVID-19

32% Since COVID-19 began



Conclusion

The provision of care by FCGs has been more critical as the result of the COVID-19. The impact of the pandemic on family caregivers caring at home and in congregate care, and their related needs, need immediate attention from both the health and social systems of care. Now is the opportunity to build a better system to support family caregiver's health and wellbeing during their caregiving journey.

Next Steps

Educating and mandating health and community social care providers to identify and support family caregivers is one of the next critical steps.

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