# Black Caregivers Less Likely to Suffer From Depression

Experts attribute the difference between these caregivers and their white counterparts to stronger social support.

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Caring for a loved one with cancer can be emotionally taxing. But Black caregivers are less likely to experience distress or depression than white caregivers, according to new findings presented at the 11th American Association for Cancer Research (AACR) Cancer Conference, reports AACR.

Researchers enrolled 44 African-American and 46 white informal caregivers—family or friends as opposed to medical professionals—who were providing end-of-life care to cancer patients to compare perceived burden, depression and distress between both racial groups.

Participants were surveyed on demographics, preparedness for caregiving, and distress and then rated on depression and caregiver burden.

Compared with their white counterparts, Black caregivers reported significantly less distress, depression and caregiver burden. In addition, overall, older caregivers had lower distress levels than younger caregivers.

According to Maria Thomson, PhD, assistant professor in the Department of Health Behavior and Policy at Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, feeling properly prepared to be a caregiver corresponded with a caregiver's well-being.

But for African Americans, social support from church or faith-based groups also played an important role in mitigating emotional and mental troubles.

"Finding that African-American caregivers reported lower levels of caregiver burden and depression, as compared to white caregivers, is important for understanding how to develop effective caregiver supports," said Laura A. Siminoff, PhD, first author and dean of the College of Public Health at Temple University in Philadelphia.

According to Siminoff, this study highlights significant "sociocultural differences in the ways in which caregivers experience and attach meaning to caregiving, where they prefer to seek support and the types of support that we would be most helpful."

Although these were only initial findings from a larger ongoing study, researchers believe more detailed information will emerge about how caregivers fare over time and about factors affecting their health.

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