

IFA launches their Technical Report of their national survey on the experiences and needs of care providers of people living with dementia, with the aim to increase awareness and understand the perspectives of Canadian caregivers.

1 September, TORONTO, Canada –

For World Alzheimer's Month, The International Federation on Ageing (IFA) is proud to announce the Technical Report and Survey Findings for the project Increasing Awareness and Understanding Perspectives of Dementia Caregivers. Each September, people unite from all corners of the world to raise awareness and to challenge the stigma that persists around Alzheimer's disease and all types of dementia. Despite popular believe, dementia is not a normal part of ageing. Responding to the call of World Alzheimer's Month to change perceptions and increase existing public knowledge around Alzheimer's disease and dementia, the IFA is proud to continue to raise awareness on the lived experience of caregivers for persons living with dementia.¹

Today there are over 1 billion older adults globally, and by 2030 it is estimated that 1 in 6 persons will be over the age of 60 years.² While the development of Alzheimer's disease or other dementias is not a normal part of ageing, the prevalence of this collection of diseases does increase with age.

People with dementia can live dignified lives but as their disease progresses, they increasingly rely on others in order to exercise their autonomy.³ Echoing the mandate of the UN Decade of Healthy Ageing ('the Decade'), the IFA is dedicated to helping maintain and increase the functional ability of older adults through policy and practice change, which in the context of dementia must include robust and meaningful engagement and incorporation of the voices and perspectives of those supporting and providing care.²

The IFA's Technical Report Increasing Awareness and Understanding Perspectives of Dementia Caregivers provides new information on the status and lived experiences of Canadians who provide care for a person with dementia.

"Alzheimer's is such a tragic and painful thing to see happen to someone you love, but at the same time ... there is a sort of sense of like freeing...I don't know I'm not trying to glorify it...but I also just see the beauty in it too, but at the same time I wish it never existed. I wonder what's going on in her head sometimes. I wish I could know what the confusion is like so that I could help her. I often feel helpless, but I won't ever give up on her."

- Anonymous Survey Respondent

As populations continue to rapidly age, the significant physical, mental, and financial impacts of caring for an individual living with dementia must be addressed. Despite the importance of caregivers and the significant burdens on this population efforts to understand the perspectives, needs and insights of this community in Canada have been limited. The Technical Report Increasing Awareness and Understanding Perspectives of Dementia Caregivers is available on the IFA's Vaccines4Life (V4L) platform and IFA's homepage.

Media Contact

For more information, please contact Ms. Elizabeth Lewis, Policy and Project Coordinator, IFA at elewis@ifa.ngo

About the International Federation on Ageing (IFA)

IFA is an international, non-governmental organization (NGO) with a unique membership base comprising government, NGOs, academics, industry, and individuals in over 80 countries. Over the last 45 years, the IFA has become known as a leading and innovative organization that works across disciplines and sectors toward common goals that improve the lives of older people.

Improving rates of vaccination globally is a priority of IFA, as a key contributor to healthy ageing. The IFA, across almost a decade, and through the Vaccines4Life program, has worked alongside committed organizations to address barriers to improve adult vaccination rates in the context of healthy ageing.

The IFA has general consultative status at the United Nations and as a non-State actor at the World Health Organization (WHO) is in a position to contribute to and inform intergovernmental dialogue, while support civil society at a national and local level.

References

1. Alzheimer's Disease International. World Alzheimer's Month [Internet]. 2024 [cited 2024 Aug 14]. Available from: <https://www.alzint.org/get-involved/world-alzheimers-month/>
2. World Health Organization. Decade of Healthy Ageing Baseline Report [Internet]. 2021 [cited 2024 Jul 9]. Available from: <https://apps.who.int/iris/rest/bitstreams/1348996/retrieve>
3. Cruise C, Lashewicz B. Dementia and dignity of identity: A qualitative evidence synthesis. [cited 2024 Jul 9]; Available from: </pmc/articles/PMC9109213/>