

# Communication dilemmas ID'd within Alzheimer's care

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(HealthDay)—For nurses and care assistants, specific communication dilemmas surround the provision of social support to families of patients with Alzheimer's disease, according to a study published online Nov. 12 in the *Journal of Applied Communication Research*.

Anne M. Stone, Ph.D., from Rollins College in Winter Park, Fla., interviewed 32 nurses and care assistants to examine the types of social support perceived by the professional caregiver to be most helpful for families of patients with Alzheimer's disease.

The author reported that, in most situations in which a family member sought support from a nurse or care assistant to manage their uncertainty, informational support was perceived as helpful. Specific communicative dilemmas were reported by [nurses](#) and care assistants, including providing information versus maintaining institutional policy; providing options versus instructing the family what to do; and giving reassuring information versus information that may seem discouraging. Communicating a common set of expectations among families and nursing staff and making caregiving visible may manage these dilemmas.

"Participants described several dilemmas of communicating social support that highlight the complexity of communication in the context of Alzheimer's disease," Stone writes. "Because social support from nursing staff has the potential to help [family members](#) manage their uncertainty, this research has important practical implications that may improve the caregivers' [stress levels](#), the families' [experiences](#), and the patients' care."

**More information:** [Abstract](#)  
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