

## Depression in dementia more common in community care, study finds

December 16 2014

---

A University of Manchester study of over 400 people in eight EU countries with severe dementia has found that those residing in long-term care homes are less likely to suffer from depressive symptoms than those living in the community.

Researchers studied 414 people with severe dementia along with their carers in England, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Spain and Sweden. The study gathered information on quality of life, activities of [daily living](#) such as [bathing](#), feeding and [dressing](#) and presence of depressive symptoms using standardised measures.

In the groups studied, 37% of the 217 people living in the community showed signs of depression compared to 23% of the 197 in care homes. It is one of the few studies comparing similar groups of people living at home and in nursing homes.

Professor David Challis, from the University's Personal Social Services Research Unit, led the study. He said: "Despite the differences between the countries involved, the pattern of depression observed in the community-dwelling group was consistent.

"In addition this difference may be partly explained by the responses received from carers. Often, relatives of people with dementia are more distressed by symptoms of depression than professional care workers, so this may have influenced their ratings on the depression measure.

"What we need is more support for carers to help them cope with their relatives' depressive symptoms and to recognise the problem before it gets to severe levels."

The study also looked at the rates of anti-depressant prescribing across the different countries. It found that England and Spain had the highest rates. In Germany there were more people suffering [depressive symptoms](#), but they had the lowest rates of antidepressant use.

Overall Finland (15%) and the Netherlands (21%) had the lowest rates of depression in people with severe dementia, compared to 23% overall.

According to the research, this suggests other EU countries could learn from their example. "By studying a number of different countries you can gain insights into different ways of meeting needs," Professor Challis said.

"Certainly the system in Finland and the Netherlands seems to have much to offer to UK care providers and overall we found that more needs to be done to help family carers identify? and cope with their relatives' symptoms of depression."

**More information:** Clarissa M. Giebel, Caroline Sutcliffe, Anna Renom-Guiteras, Seija Arve, Ingalill Rahm Hallberg, Maria Soto, Adelaida Zabalegui, Jan Hamers, Kai Saks and David Challis, 'Depressive Symptomatology in Severe Dementia in a European Sample: Prevalence, Associated Factors and Prescription Rate of Anti-Depressants', *International Psychogeriatrics*, DOI: [dx.doi.org/10.1017/S1041610214002610](https://doi.org/10.1017/S1041610214002610)

Provided by University of Manchester

Citation: Depression in dementia more common in community care, study finds (2014, December 16) retrieved 6 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2014-12-depression-dementia-common.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.