

Study examines support for those caring for a loved one with dementia

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Caring for someone with dementia is one of the most challenging caring roles in today's society. A new *Health and Social Care in the Community* study has explored the support and social networks of family carers of

people with dementia towards the end of life and the role of the internet in supporting them.

In interviews with 20 current and former family carers aged 65 and over in England, carers described a separation of two worlds: their internal caring world and the outside world of society, with varying networks of support. Carers discussed experiencing a spectrum of losses but also a process of reconstruction of life as a carer. The [internet](#) helped to provide support, including options to develop new relationships and networks. The internet alone was not enough, however, and [human interaction](#) was still needed.

"The findings from our work suggest that family carers can feel separated from society, and have to develop new social and support networks," said lead author Dr. Nathan Davies, of University College London. "As our population ages and internet savvy groups age and become carers themselves, I think we will increasingly see the internet being used by carers as a source of support for them in this difficult caring role. With this we need to emphasise the use and benefits of the internet for [social networking](#) for carers whilst also remembering it cannot replace face to face human contact."

More information: Nathan Davies et al. A "separation of worlds": The support and social networks of family carers of people with dementia at the end of life, and the possible role of the internet, *Health & Social Care in the Community* (2019). [DOI: 10.1111/hsc.12701](https://doi.org/10.1111/hsc.12701)

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