Clinicians should address needs of family caregivers of persons with dementia

December 5 2016

More than 15 million family members and other unpaid caregivers provide care to persons living with dementia in the United States. Yet the current healthcare environment and reimbursement models emphasize obligations toward individual patients, preventing clinicians from reaching out to these caregivers to assess their needs and provide care.

In 'Who Should Assess the Needs of and Care for a Dementia Patient's Caregiver?' recently published by the *AMA Journal of Ethic*s online, Nancy A. Hodgson, PhD, RN, FAAN, the Anthony Buividas Endowed Term Chair of Gerontology and Associate Professor in the Department Biobehavioral Health Sciences at the University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing (Penn Nursing), examines the ethical obligation of clinicians to reach out to family caregivers of persons with dementia to ask them to share their challenges and concerns and then to provide resources for help.

"In dementia care, attention to family caregivers should be mandatory as their health and well-being are a critical part of the context of providing care to a patient with dementia," said Hodgson. "We have a moral obligation to assure the health and well-being of family members who are intimately involved in caring for a patient with dementia."

More information: journalofethics.ama-assn.org/2 … 6/12/ecas1-1612.html

Medical Xpress

Provided by University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing

Citation: Clinicians should address needs of family caregivers of persons with dementia (2016, December 5) retrieved 21 July 2023 from https://medicalxpress.com/news/2016-12-clinicians-family-caregivers-persons-dementia.html

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