

## Issues Faced by Primary Caregivers of the Elderly: Evidence from Literature

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Population ageing is a global occurrence. Since the ageing population has grown significantly, the need for caregivers to take care of these elderly has increased dramatically. Although families have undergone marked changes, they are the main source of care-giving in developing countries including Sri Lanka. Family caregivers support the elderly in health, social, emotional and financial domains and in return may face many consequences. The need for family care-giving is specially highlighted with respect to developing countries where intuitional systems to cope with ageing are not properly established. This study is based on existing literature on issues faced by primary caregivers of the elderly. The literature search included selected electronic databases, manual searches of journals, and the bibliographies of retrieved articles published from 1995 to 2013. Caregivers' issues are identified and analysed under two main areas: socio-economic and health-related. The findings reveal that caregivers face numerous social and economic hardships such as family conflicts, loss of earnings, having to bear extra expenses, and employment-related issues. Since the majority of caregivers are employed, an increase of elderly dependents creates a "care-giving burden". It is also found that missed working hours/ promotions, working fewer hours, and quitting jobs are the other issues faced by caregivers. Considering the health issues of care-giving, many studies found that caregivers face physical and mental health strains more than non-caregivers. "Care-giving stress" has been found to be the major issue of caregivers, which has jeopardized their own health when providing care. Literature shows the need to address the different support needs of family caregivers to overcome these social, economic, and health issues and provide social and financial support to them.

Keywords: Caregivers, Care-giving burden, Care-giving stress