

408 - PREDICTING CAREGIVER HEALTH AND RELATIONSHIP SATISFACTION: THE IMPORTANCE OF DEMENTIA PATIENT SOCIOEMOTIONAL FUNCTIONING

Marcela C. Otero^{1,2}, Casey L. Brown³, & Robert W. Levenson³

¹Sierra Pacific Mental Illness, Research, Education, and Clinical Center (MIRECC), Veterans Affairs (VA) Palo Alto Health Care System, Palo Alto, CA; ²Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, Stanford University School of Medicine, Stanford, CA; ³Department of Psychology, University of California, Berkeley

Dementia caregiving is associated with a variety of negative outcomes including poor caregiver mental and physical health and low relationship satisfaction. Prior research has linked these negative caregiver outcomes to patients' cognitive and psychiatric symptoms. However, few studies have examined the link between patients' socioemotional functioning and caregiver outcomes. We examined how patients' socioemotional functioning was related to caregiver marital satisfaction, physical health, and psychopathology in a sample of 103 caregivers of dementia patients (with a wide range of diagnoses). Measures included: (a) patient socioemotional functioning (Caregiver Assessment of Socioemotional Functioning), (b) patient cognitive functioning (Mini-Mental State Exam), (c) patient psychiatric symptomatology (Neuropsychiatric Inventory), (d) caregiver marital satisfaction (Locke-Wallace Marital Adjustment Test), (e) caregiver physical health (Medical Outcomes Study Health Survey), and (f) caregiver psychopathology (Symptom Checklist-90-Revised). Results indicated that poor patient socioemotional functioning predicted lower levels of caregiver marital satisfaction ($\beta = -.45$, $p < .001$) and physical health ($\beta = -.25$, $p < .05$), and greater caregiver psychopathology ($\beta = .41$, $p < .001$), above and beyond patient cognitive functioning and psychiatric symptoms. These findings suggest that low levels of socioemotional functioning in patients make important and unique contributions to negative caregiver outcomes.