

The role of subjective social status in living well for carers of people with dementia: findings from the IDEAL programme

Caring for a family member with dementia can be both rewarding and challenging. Some carers lack support and find that services and organisations are not sensitive to their needs. This can make them feel devalued, which affects their well-being

In this study we were interested to find out how carers of people with dementia evaluated their standing in their local community and in wider society. We then explored how these evaluations related to their ability to 'live well'.

We used information provided by 1278 carers of people with dementia taking part in the IDEAL programme. Carers were either family members, friends, or other supporters of someone with dementia. We measured 'living well' by asking carers to complete questionnaires on their quality of life, well-being and satisfaction with life.

We showed the carers two pictures of a ten-rung ladder where the richest and best-educated would be on the top rung. We asked them to place a cross on the rung where they feel they stand compared firstly to other people in society and secondly to other people in their local community.

Carers rated their standing higher in society than in their local community. People who rated their standing in society or the community more highly had better quality of life, well-being, and satisfaction with life.

Initiatives that increase awareness and understanding of dementia and the role of family carers in the community or wider society may help to enhance carers' perceptions of their social status and in turn improve ability to 'live well'.

This is a summary of a [research article](#) which appeared in the **International Journal of Care and Caring** in February 2021.