

A COMPARISON OF INFORMAL CAREGIVERS' EXPERIENCES OF TENDING BLACK CARIBBEAN AND WHITE DEPENDANTS WITH ADVANCED DISEASE

J Koffman & IJ Higginson, Department of Palliative Care & Policy, King's College London, UK.

Object of study: To describe and compare the main needs and problems experienced by informal caregivers of black Caribbean and white patients with advanced disease.

Method: Comparative, retrospective, semi-structured interviews with informal caregivers.

Results: 106 and 110 caregivers of black Caribbean and white deceased patients were contacted producing a sample of 50 cases per ethnic group, a response rate of 47% and 45%. 76% of black Caribbean and 86% of white patients were restricted in their activities of daily living during their last year of life. 70% caregivers of black Caribbeans needed help assisting their dependants with these tasks compared to 33% of those caring for white dependants ($p<0.001$). 77% of respondents representing black Caribbeans described their lives as having been 'severely/fairly' restricted compared to 56% of those who cared for white dependants. More caregivers of black Caribbean than white dependants reported that they gave up visiting friends and relatives ($p=0.04$), going out for social occasions ($p=0.02$), and entertaining people at home ($p=0.04$). Health problems associated with caregiving were more prevalent among the Caribbean carer sample.

Conclusion: The data suggests that caregivers of black Caribbean dependants have a tendency to fare worse across a number of domains. Explanations accounting for these differences will be discussed together with implications for practice.