

CARE *for the caregiver*

Alzheimer's Caretakers Need Love, Too

(NAPSA)—The most dramatic increase in the number of people with Alzheimer's disease by the year 2050 will be in the population age 85 and older, when about eight million cases are expected in this group. With the impact of Alzheimer's disease growing as more of the U.S. population heads into their senior years, the National Institute on Aging (NIA), part of the National Institutes of Health, is conducting research aimed at making sure that people who take care of those with Alzheimer's get help, too.

Alzheimer's disease destroys a person's ability to carry out daily activities, affecting the parts of the brain that control thought, memory, and language. Not only does a diagnosis of Alzheimer's have an enormous effect on the person with the disease, but the progressive nature of the disease also places a tremendous strain on the person's family, friends and especially the primary caretaker. Depression and high levels of stress are seen commonly in family caregivers of people who have Alzheimer's, according to a multi-site study called REACH, or Resources for Enhancing Alzheimer's Caregiver Health. REACH is funded by NIA and the National Institute of Nursing Research (NINR), another component of NIH.

In a separate report, study investigators found that Alzheimer's caregivers could benefit from bereavement and counseling services before death of the family member, because of the long periods of steady decline associated with the disease. Education on pain control, coping and other social support could also help reduce the burden of caregiving and depression, scientists say.



"As we search for ways to treat and ultimately prevent Alzheimer's disease, we must continue to provide information and strategies to help caregivers and policymakers cope with the social and behavioral aspects of the disease," says Dr. Sidney Stahl of NIA's Behavioral and Social Research Program.

For more information for family members and friends of people with Alzheimer's, a free booklet, Caregiver Guide, is available from NIA. The guide, NIH publication #01-4013, is available in both English and Spanish. Another free resource, "Home Safety for People with Alzheimer's Disease," is also available. To receive these booklets or fact sheets and other information on Alzheimer's without charge, contact the Alzheimer's Disease Education and Referral (ADEAR) Center at www.alzheimers.org or call toll free 1-800-438-4380.