

Cultural Task Difficulties and Negative Consequences for Caregivers From Diverse Communities

Rachel Schaffer, David Bass, and Sara Powers
Benjamin Rose Institute on Aging

Jenna McDavid and Ocean Le
Diverse Elders Coalition

Collaborators

Diverse Elders Coalition and Benjamin Rose Institute on Aging conducted a national survey of family and friend caregivers from diverse racial, ethnic, and sexual orientation backgrounds.

Diverse Elders Coalition Member Organizations:

- National Asian Pacific Center on Aging (NAPCA)
- National Hispanic Council on Aging (NHCOA)
- National Indian Council on Aging, Inc. (NICOA)
- SAGE
- Southeast Asia resource Action Center (SEARAC)
- National Caucus and Center on Black Aging, Inc. (NCBA)

Research Question

Is there a relationship between perceived difficulties performing cultural tasks (i.e., immigration issues and language barriers) and a various negative and positive caregiver outcomes?

Survey Description and Sample

Caregiver Survey:

- Cross-sectional
- Anonymous
- Print and online versions available in 8 languages
- Guided by Stress Process Model
- Convenience sample - newsletter, website and social media ads, community events participants, senior center participants

Eligible Caregivers

- Providing ongoing unpaid help to a relative or friend ≥55 years of age
- Assisting because of ongoing health problems or disabilities
- Living in the US

Survey Participants

- Total survey responses = 840
- Analysis sample = 389, includes caregivers who self-identify as: Chinese Americans (n=102), Southeast Asian Americans (n=148), Hispanic/Latino Americans (n=94), and Multiple Ethnicities (n=45)

Sample Background Characteristics

Table 1. Mean/Percent for Covariates in Multivariate Analyses

	Mean or Percent
Chinese American	26.2%
Southeast Asian American	38.0%
Hispanic/Latino American	24.2%
Multiple Ethnicities	11.6%
Caregiver Age	50.4
Care Receiver Age	75.0
Caregiver Education (1-9; < High School to PhD/MD/JD)	5.2
Shared Household	48.1%
Caregiver Female	75.8%
Care Receiver Female	62.5%
Number of Personal Care Dependencies	3.1
Memory Difficulties (0-2; No Diff. to Great Deal of Diff.)	.82
Care Receiver Health Rating (1-5; Poor to Excellent)	2.0

Cultural Task Difficulties

3 item index

- Legal issues related to immigration or naturalization procedures
- Translating health-related information into their main language
- Overcoming language barriers when talking with healthcare or other service providers

Response Options

- 0 = No difficulty, 1 = Some difficulty, 2 = Great deal of difficulty

Table 2. Descriptive Data on Cultural Task Difficulties: Key Independent Variable Used in Multivariate Analyses

Mean	Std. Deviation	High Task Difficulties	Low Task Difficulties
.45	.63	33.2%	66.8%

Caregiver Outcomes

Table 3. Descriptive Data on Eight Caregiver Outcomes Used as Dependent Variables in Multivariate Analyses

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Range
Isolation (8 items)	1.36	.61	0-3
Health Strain (4 items)	1.24	.66	0-3
Relationship Strain (4 items)	.97	.52	0-3
Work Strain (5 items)	.51	.61	0-3
Depression (11 items)	.55	.38	0-2
Quality Care Receiver Healthcare (8 items)	1.94	.49	0-3
Satisfaction Care Receiver Family/Friend Support (1 item)	3.32	.81	1-4
Satisfaction Caregiver Family/Friend Support (1 item)	3.29	.78	1-4

- Most common types of caregiver strain were isolation and health strain.
- 15-25% of caregivers have high levels of strain and/or depression.
- Hispanic/Latino caregivers had higher levels of negative caregiving consequences and/or depression compared to the other 3 ethnic groups.
- Overall high levels of satisfaction with support from family members and friends.

Analytic Strategy

- Multiple regression analysis with each outcome as dependent variable
- Association of cultural task difficulties and each outcome is estimated controlling for background characteristics
- Conditional means for respondents with high vs. low scores for cultural task difficulties estimated for each outcome to illustrate statistically significant multivariate results

Multivariate Analysis

Table 4. Statistically Significant ($p \leq .05$) Regression Coefficients for the Association of Cultural Task Difficulties and Eight Caregiver Outcomes

Caregiver Outcomes	Standardized Regression Coefficients
Isolation	.18
Health Strain	.19
Relationship Strain	.16
Work Strain	.24
Depression	.30
Quality Care Receiver Healthcare	-.18
Satisfaction Care Receiver Family/Friend Support	-.15
Satisfaction Caregiver Family/Friend Support	-.18

- Caregiver reports of difficulties assisting their relative or friend with cultural tasks are consistently related to all 8 caregiver outcomes.
- Associations between cultural task difficulties are of moderate size and are statistically independent of various background and health characteristics.
- More cultural task difficulties are associated with higher levels of four types of caregiver strain and symptoms of depression; and lower levels of satisfaction with the quality of healthcare and support from family members and friends.

Comparison of Caregivers with High vs. Low Cultural Task Difficulties

Table 5. Comparison of Mean Scores and Percent Difference for Eight Caregiver Outcomes

Caregiver Outcomes	High Task Difficulties	Low Task Difficulties	Percent Difference
Isolation	1.65	1.27	26.0
Health Strain	1.62	1.11	37.4
Relationship Strain	1.11	0.91	19.8
Work Strain	0.71	0.41	53.6
Depression	0.77	0.48	46.4
Quality Care Receiver Healthcare	1.89	2.03	7.1
Satisfaction Care Receiver Family/Friend Support	3.16	3.41	7.6
Satisfaction Caregiver Family/Friend Support	2.99	3.41	13.1

- Comparisons of caregivers who report high vs. low levels of cultural task difficulties illustrate statistically significant regression results, although without the benefits of statistical controls.
- Caregivers with high compared to low cultural task difficulties have 20% to 54% higher scores on caregiver strain and depression.
- Caregivers with high compared to low cultural task difficulties have 7% to 13% lower scores on satisfaction with the quality of healthcare and satisfaction with family and friend support.

Conclusion and Implications

- Caregiver reports of difficulties with assisting with cultural tasks (e.g., legal issues related to immigration, translating health information, and overcoming language barriers with providers) is consistently associated with adverse and beneficial caregiver outcomes.
- The cross-sectional nature of this study cannot determine whether cultural task difficulties is a cause or consequence of adverse and beneficial outcomes.
- While future research can investigate causation, current findings suggest difficulties with cultural tasks is at least a risk factor for identifying caregivers who are more likely to experience negative caregiving consequences.
- Healthcare and community service providers should consider including questions about whether caregivers are assisting with cultural tasks and whether they perceive these tasks as difficult or stressful.
- Results also suggest caregiver support programs should be attending to culture-related tasks as a window into caregiving challenges and a potential type of needed direct assistance.

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