COVID-19 has the potential to exacerbate stresses of family caregiving. While studies during COVID-19 have focused on caregivers of those with memory / cognitive issues like Alzheimer’s Disease, less attention has been paid to those caring for persons with emotional / developmental / behavioral disorders. This paper compares family caregivers of persons with emotional / developmental / behavioral disorders (EDB); physical conditions (PH); and memory / cognitive problems (MC) during the early phase of the pandemic. We focus on demographics, caregiving context, COVID-related caregiver stressors, and validated physical, psychosocial, and financial well-being outcomes. We conducted a cross-sectional national online survey during April-May, 2020 (n = 556). The sample included 274 PH (50%), 141 MC (25%), and 141 EDB (25%) caregivers. EDB caregivers were younger, with younger care recipients who were more likely to be their child. EDB caregivers reported more COVID-related caregiver stressors than MC or PH caregivers, including increased caregiving duties (p<.01); more family disagreements about care provision (p=.05); and worsened mental health of the care recipient (p<.01). In multivariate regression models, EDB caregivers had significantly higher anxiety; depression; and fatigue (all p<.01); more sleep disturbance (p=.05); less social participation (p<.05); and poorer overall financial well-being (p<.05). MC caregivers also reported more negative outcomes, but effects were consistently strongest for EDB caregivers. This study shows that EDB caregivers are at significantly elevated risk for negative impacts due to COVID-19 and should receive increased support and attention during this public health crisis.

PSYCHOLOGICAL CORRELATES OF (NON)USE OF FORMAL RESOURCES BY FAMILY CAREGIVERS OF PEOPLE WITH DEMENTIA

Laura Gallego-Alberto,1 Isabel Cabrera,1 María Márquez-González,1 María del Sequeros Chaparro,1 Laura Mérida-Herrera,1 Cristina Huertas,2 and Andrés Losada-Baltar,2
1. Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, Madrid, Madrid, Spain, 2. Universidad Rey Juan Carlos, Madrid, Madrid, Spain

Caring for a relative with dementia is a stressful task characterized by a high number of demands extended in time. Therefore, caregivers frequently report the need for assistance to cope with the situation. However, formal resources use is low among that population. The objective of this study was to explore the correlates of (non)use of formal resources (day care center and home care) by family caregivers of people with dementia. Participants were 225 dementia family caregivers that were individually assessed in a) use of formal resources, b) sociodemographic variables, c) stressors (frequency and reaction to behavioral problems), and d) psychological variables (depression, anxiety, and dysfunctional thoughts about caregiving). A logistic regression was done comparing those who used formal resources with those who did not use them. Caregivers who did not use formal resources were younger (OR = .95; 95% CI [.92 - .98]), devoted more daily hours to caring (OR = 1.07; 95% CI [1.02 - 1.11]), reported higher levels of dysfunctional thoughts about caregiving (OR = 1.07; 95% CI [1.04 – 1.10]) and higher anxiety levels (OR = 1.07; 95% CI [1.00– 1.13]), and their care-recipient had a higher functional autonomy (OR = 1.04; 95% CI [1.02 – 1.05]). Higher levels of anxiety and dysfunctional thoughts in caregivers may be act as barriers to seek for formal support. Targeting these variables may help to increase the use of formal resources by family caregivers of people with dementia.

Session 4090 (Symposium)

ISOLATION IN OLDER ADULTS IN THE UNITED STATES AND JAPAN: AN EARLY EXAMINATION OF IOT POSSIBILITIES

Chair: Dana Bradley Co-Chair: carmen Sceppa
Discussant: carmen Sceppa

Isolation in older adults is a growing problem in both the US and Japan. This symposium showcases work funded by NSF and JST (Japan Science Technology Committee) to develop smart technology to create connected communities by integrating gerontology and technology research. The U.S. and Japan are experiencing dramatic population aging and share several similarities: Populous (U.S. 327 million at #3 and Japan 127 million at #11) and economically developed (GD): the U.S. #1 and Japan #3) and isolation was increasing even before the pandemic. This multi-year project addresses the challenges of isolation by using smart technologies in culturally appropriate ways to support older adults and suggests ways that isolation and loneliness may be managed by older persons, local governments, and NGOs.

The first paper examines the experiences of loneliness as characterized by early retirees in both countries. The interdisciplinary research team has used this qualitative set of case studies to identify promising technology support points. Our second paper explores these issues surrounding isolation using data from Study on the Lifestyle and Values of Senior Citizens (Japan). This analysis focuses on longitudinal data from both countries and helps situate our work outside the Covid-19 Pandemic. The third presentation focuses on the intersection between culture and technology and proposes a continued research collaboration model. Our discussion will highlight how community stakeholders in U.S. and Japan have a role in creating evidence-based adaptive environments to detect and mitigate isolation by developing and using gero-centric approaches.