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Using Twitter to Understand the COVID-19 Experiences of People

With Dementia: Infodemiology Study

Juanita-Dawne Bacsu[1] , PhD; Megan E O'Connell[1] , PhD; Allison Cammer[2] , PhD; Mahsa Azizi[3] , MSc; Karl Grewal[1] , BSc; Lisa Poole[4] , BA; Shoshana Green[1] , MEd; Saskia Sivananthan[5] , PhD; Raymond J Spiteri[3] , PhD

[1]Department of Psychology, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, SK, Canada

[2]College of Pharmacy and Nutrition, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, SK, Canada

[3]Department of Computer Science, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, SK, Canada

[4]Dementia Advocacy Canada, Calgary, AB, Canada

[5]Alzheimer Society of Canada, Toronto, ON, Canada

Abstract (600 word limits)

Background: The COVID-19 pandemic is affecting people with dementia in numerous ways. Nevertheless, there is a paucity of research on the COVID-19 impact on people with dementia and their care partners.

Objective: Using Twitter, the purpose of this study is to understand the experiences of COVID-19 for people with dementia and their care partners.

Methods: We collected tweets on COVID-19 and dementia using the GetOldTweets application in Python from February 15 to September 7, 2020. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the tweets.

Results: From the 5063 tweets analyzed with line-by-line coding, we identified 4 main themes including (1) separation and loss; (2) COVID-19 confusion, despair, and abandonment; (3) stress and exhaustion exacerbation; and (4) unpaid sacrifices by formal care providers. Conclusions: There is an imminent need for governments to rethink using a one-size-fits-all response to COVID-19 policy and use a collaborative approach to support people with dementia. Collaboration and more evidence-informed research are essential to reducing COVID-19 mortality and improving the quality of life for people with dementia and their care partners.

Biography (200 word limit)

COVID-19 Volunteer Psychologist for Frontline Healthcare Providers - https://cpa.ca/corona-virus/psychservices/#Saskatchewan

Alzheimer Society Canada Dementia and COVID-19 Task Force member - https://alzheimer.ca/en/Home/Living-with-dementia/managing-through-covid-19/covid-19-and-dementia-task-force

Associate Member, Canadian Centre for Health and Safety in Agriculture, Medicine

Clinical Psychologist, Neuropsychology - Rural and Remote Memory Clinic (RRMC) http://www.cchsa-ccssma.usask.ca/ruraldementiacare/rrmc.html

PI - Team 15 Rural - RRMCi https://bit.ly/memoryclinic

Canadian Consortium on Neurodegeneration in Aging (CCNA) http://ccna-ccnv.ca/en/research/theme-3/

Co-I - Rural Dementia Action Research (RaDAR) team http://www.cchsa-ccssma.usask.ca/ruraldementiacare/investigators.html

PI - VideoTherapy Analysis Laboratory (ViTAL) http://ssrl.usask.ca/vital/

Member - Psychology Working Group & Methodology Working Group - Canadian Longitudinal Study on Aging (CLSA) https://www.clsa-elcv.ca/

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