

# Stroke Patients' Caregivers: Their Experiences and Needs: A Qualitative Literature Review

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## **Abstract**

**Background:** Home-care for stroke patients contributes to physical, emotional and social difficulties for the caregivers.

**Objective:** To explore the experience and needs of stroke patients' caregivers in qualitative research reports.

**Significance:** Understanding the experiences of the caregivers from their own subjective perspective is an initial step for nurses in their way to understand caregivers' needs so that to help provide evidence based care to improve the quality of life for patients and caregivers.

**Methods:** literature review searches were conducted using CINAHL, and MEDLINE. The key search terms were *caregiver, stroke, and qualitative*. Full text and peer reviewed qualitative studies were evaluated in this paper. The studies were limited to those published between 2000 and 2008.

**Results:** Fatigue, sleep alteration, exhaustion and pain were the most documented physical complaints of caregivers. Worries, anxiety and uncertainty were the hallmarks of the caregivers' emotional state.

Social role changes led caregivers to feelings of social isolation. In general, the caregivers' needs were neglected. They would have liked to access information about the disease, caregiving tasks, and community resources.

**Conclusion:** Quality home management for stroke patients depends on healthy, well prepared and trained caregivers. Nurses play a significant role in carefully listening to their concerns, needs, and positively supporting them throughout their caregiving trajectory.

**Keywords:** Caregivers, Experiences, Family, Integrative Literature Review, Needs, Qualitative, Stroke Patients.

Abu Kamel, A. Bond, A. E., Froelicher, E. (2009). Stroke patients' caregivers: their experiences and needs, A qualitative literature review. *Jordan Medical Journal*, 4(43), 341-349.

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