Impact of donepezil on caregiving burden for patients with Alzheimer's disease.

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Source

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Abstract

Comprehensive Alzheimer's disease (AD) treatment should address caregiver well-being. We predicted that caregiver burden would be lower among caregivers of AD patients who received donepezil relative to caregivers of patients not treated with donepezil. A self-administered, nationwide survey of AD caregivers was used to match caregivers of patients treated with donepezil (n = 274) to caregivers of patients not treated with donepezil (n = 274). The Caregiver Burden Scale measured time demands and distress linked to commonly performed caregiving tasks. Respondents were three-quarters female, with an average age of 60 years. Results demonstrated that donepezil caregivers reported significantly lower scores on difficulty of caregiving. This difference remained when statistical controls for multiple patient and caregiver variables were imposed. However, selection factors must be recognized as a possible explanation for differences. The groups reported no difference on the time-demand subscale. In conclusion, better management of AD symptoms through donepezil treatment may reduce the burden of caregiving, providing physicians with a pharmacologic approach to improving quality of life for AD patients and their families.

PMID: 11081959 [PubMed - indexed for MEDLINE]