



North Dakota Dementia Care Services Program (DCSP): Characteristics of Persons with Dementia

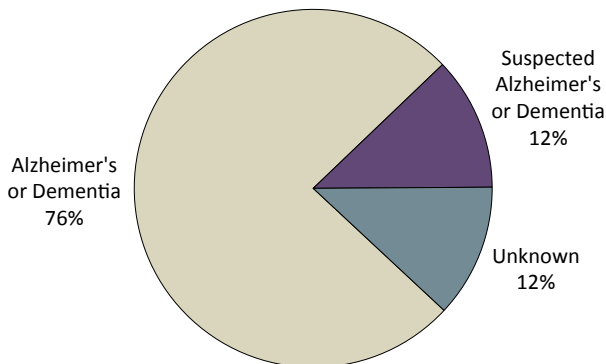
This fact sheet is Number 3 in a four-part series.

The DCSP's intent is to increase caregiver knowledge about dementia and caregiving, decrease caregiver stress, and coincide with estimated health and long-term care cost savings.

Persons with dementia (PWD) - attributes

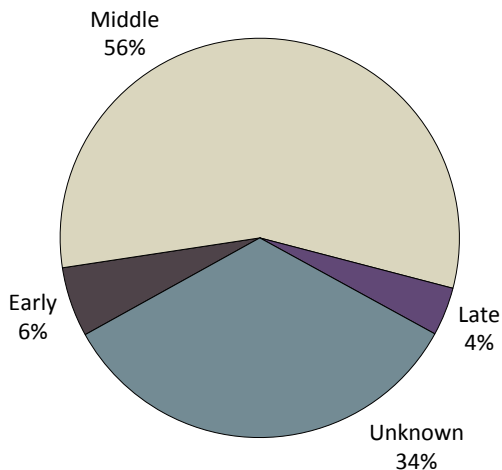
- 53% were female
- 21% were military veterans
- Average age was 78.4 years

Disease Diagnosis



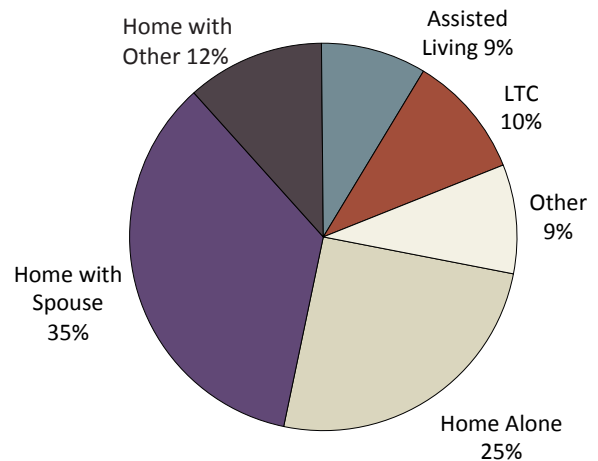
Three-quarters of participants had a diagnosis of dementia/Alzheimer's disease; 9% had a comorbidity.

Stage of Dementia/Alzheimer's Disease



Most PWDs were at mid-stage of their disease process; 4% had young-onset.

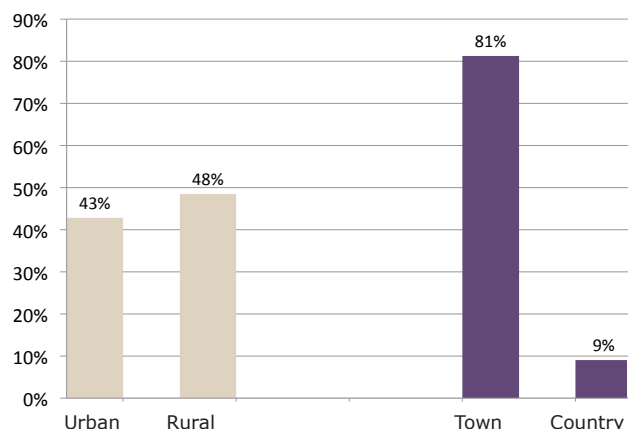
Living Arrangement of PWDs



Most (72%) PWDs lived at home with one-quarter residing by themselves and about one-third living with their spouse.

The majority of PWDs resided in rural areas, and four-fifths lived in a town; 11% of PWDs living home alone were further isolated by living in the country.

Geography of PWDs' Residential Location



Conclusions

- PWDs were most commonly females in their 70s with mid-stage dementia who resided in rural areas.
- Older people, including those with dementia, are increasingly finding themselves living alone.
- This trend is due to many factors including increased life longevity (out-living one's spouse), earlier diagnoses, rising divorce rates, having fewer children, work and family challenges among caregivers, and finance issues.^{1,2}
- One-quarter of DCSP PWDs lived alone which presents additional challenges for coping with the disease, preserving personal safety, and accessing needed health care.¹
- As living alone with dementia is becoming more common, it becomes increasingly important to monitor the changing living arrangements of PWDs to better address their needs.

The Dementia Care Services Program (DCSP) was created by Dementia Care Services Bill (North Dakota House Bill 1043) in 2009. Funded by a grant from the Department of Human Services, the DCSP's aim is to inform persons with dementia (PWDs) and their caregivers about dementia care issues which, in turn, may lead to increased family support, decreased depression, delays in nursing home placement, and reductions in unnecessary health service use. Administered by the Alzheimer's Association, the DCSP provides care consultations to PWDs and their caregivers; these consultations consist of assessing needs, identifying issues and concerns and resources, developing care plans and referrals, and providing education and follow-up.

References

- ¹ Alzheimer's Association. 2012 Alzheimer's disease facts and figures. *Alzheimer's & Dementia*. 2012;8:131-168.
- ² Nourhashemi F, Amouyal-Barkate K, Gillette-Guyonnet S, Cantet C, Vellas B; REAL.FR Group. Living alone with Alzheimer's disease: cross-sectional and longitudinal analysis in the REAL.FR Study. *J Nutr Health Aging*. 2005;9(2):117-20.

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