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Georgia Southern Collaborates on Examination of Vigilance in Decision-Making among Dementia Family Caregivers

April 21, 2017



Family responsibilities and social expectations often prompt conflict in caregivers' decision-making processes. Janis and Mann's (1977) conflict model describes vigilance as high-quality decision-making resulting in optimal outcomes. The purpose of this study was threefold: (1) to describe decision styles in a population of family caregivers of persons with dementia; (2) to examine the socio-economic characteristics associated with caregivers who are more likely to be vigilant decision-makers; and (3) to assess differences in caregiving experiences between vigilant and non-vigilant caregivers.

The analysis was based on 639 survey respondents recruited from a university-affiliated memory disorders clinic. A typical caregiver was Caucasian non-Hispanic, was currently married, and had two children. Approximately half of the sample used a 'pure vigilant' decision style. Vigilance was associated with more positive and fewer negative caregiving outcomes.

In conclusion, supporting caregivers to become vigilant decision-makers is a functionally viable intervention that could significantly improve the caregiving experience.

["Does vigilance in decision-making matter for dementia family caregivers?,"](#) was recently published in *Aging & Mental Health*.

Dr. Sarah Wackerbarth, Associate Professor of Health Management & Policy at the University of Kentucky was the lead author and Dr. Yelena Tarasenko, Assistant Professor of Epidemiology at the Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health Georgia Southern University was the co-author.

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