

**Results:** Participants were twenty-two people living with young-onset dementia, fifty-one informal carers and thirty-one formal caregivers. Four themes emerged: (1) impact; (2) coping; (3) service internal functioning; (4) service networking.

The affected people's young age was crucial as it increased the discrepancy between their sentiments of usefulness and inclusion in the society and the attitude of health services and caregivers. Maladaptive coping strategies were put in place as reactions to the diagnosis and in response to the absence of either structures or plans capable of re-uptaking and empowering these people.

**Conclusions:** Young-onset dementia represents a dramatic turn-of-the-screw in all the people impacted by this diagnosis. One of the needs people living with young-onset diagnosis report relates to social inclusion and maintaining a social role. Considering social needs and enhancing interpersonal interactions and mutual recognition can positively impact individuals' quality of life as it can buffer their limitations and enhance their capabilities.

### **302 - The global impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on those living with and caring for someone with dementia**

Clarissa Giebel, Marta Lenart, Ilaria Chirico, Katarzyna M. Lion

We are presenting four abstracts here for four inter-related talks into the global impact of the pandemic on dementia. Specifically, we will be presenting four talks from our international consortium (UK, India, Italy, Poland, Australia) highlighting how dementia has increased as a global public health concern during the pandemic with similar and different impacts across countries; the mental health impact on people with dementia and carers; the difficulties in using technology for social contact in dementia; as well as the impact on carers with relatives residing in institutional long-term care settings. Public involvement has been a key element of this study. The symposium will be hosted by Dr Clarissa Giebel, the PI of this international 5-country study, and talks will be presented by Dr Giebel, Marta Lenart, Dr Ilaria Chirico, and Dr Katarzyna Lion.

#### **Talk 1 Abstract**

##### **Amplifying dementia as a global public health problem: A cross-country comparison of the impact of COVID-19 pandemic**

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**Background:** Emerging evidence describes impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic upon people living with dementia and their informal carers, however without evidence-based global comparisons to date. The aim of this international study was to explore and compare the impact of COVID-19 and associated public health restrictions on the lives of people living with dementia and informal carers and access to dementia care across five countries.

**Methods:** People with dementia and informal carers from the UK, Australia, Italy, India, and Poland participated in remote semi-structured interviews. Participants were asked about their experiences of the pandemic and how restrictions have impacted on their lives and care. Transcripts were analysed by researchers in each country using thematic analysis, then combined across sites.

**Results:** Fifteen people living with dementia and 111 informal carers participated across the five countries. Four themes emerged: (1) Limited access and support; (2) Technology and issues accessing remote support; (3) Emotional impact; and (4) Decline of cognitive and physical health reported by carers. Whilst variations were noted, the pandemic has indirectly affected people with dementia and carers across all five countries. The pandemic removed access to social support services and thus increased carer burden. Remote services were not always provided and were limited in benefit and usability for those with dementia. Carers frequently described noticeably deteriorating cognitive and physical health in people with dementia.

**Conclusions:** The pandemic has amplified dementia as a global public health problem, and both people affected by the condition and their carers need support to better access vital support services to live well. This is even more important with emerging new waves and new variants of the virus affecting different countries, in our globally connected world.

## **Talk 2 Abstract**

### **Social health of people with dementia during the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic**

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**Background:** Limited access to medical and social services during the coronavirus outbreak has contributed to the exclusion of vulnerable populations, such as people with dementia and older adults. These limitations and the resulting social isolation have highlighted the importance of social relationships and their relationship to the mental health of these people. In the context of dementia, 'social health' (SH) can be defined as the role of social abilities for achieving a dynamic balance between opportunities and limitations. The concept encompasses the capacity and independency of an individual to participate in social activities alongside the influences of the surrounding social network.

**Methods:** Using a qualitative and quantitative approach, we will present social health and its determinants of people with dementia related to social care service closures and self-isolation during the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic. We present an analysis of the survey data from the cross-country population-based study and the semi-structured telephone interviews with people with and without dementia from Poland, UK, Australia and Italy aged 65 and over.

**Results:** Measuring the Social Health Index in relation to experiencing self-isolation and changes in the use of services before and during the pandemic among the people with dementia, allow us to identify the level of SH and its determinants. Also, the qualitative results revealed the indirect consequences of