Living Alone with Dementia

Identification, Unmet Needs and Safety Concerns

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Prevalence and Characteristics

Studies indicate 28%-34% of people with dementia live alone

Diagnosis/Treatment

- Much less likely to be diagnosed
- Do not receive the same level of care

Characteristics

- Predominantly female and older
- Very little known about minority status
- Lower income
- Less cognitively impaired
- More likely to have nonrelative caregivers
Unmet Needs

- Personal care needs and daily activities
- Health conditions and medications
- Nutrition and hydration
- Social isolation and loneliness

Safety Concerns

- Safety in the home
- Unattended wandering
- Ability to respond in an emergency
- Financial exploitation
Research Recommendations

- Conduct epidemiological studies that describe the conditions and circumstances of people living alone with dementia to inform public health, policy and evidence-based practice
- Develop effective approaches for identifying dementia in people living alone
- Identify the determinants (including racial and ethnic status) of people living alone with dementia
- Evaluate interventions that meet the needs and mitigate safety concerns of people with dementia living alone such as the “gatekeeper model”
- Determine effective strategies for expanding a person’s support system
- Establish whether and which assistive technologies can meet the needs and mitigate safety concerns of people living alone with dementia

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References