

The Relationship Between Self-Efficacy and Cumulative Health Risk Associated With Health Behavior Patterns in Female Caregivers of Elderly Relatives With Alzheimer's Dementia

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Objective: To promote caregiver well-being and to help caregivers persevere in their invaluable roles, personal resources that predict increased self-care and reduced health risk behaviors need to be identified. **Method:** This study examined relationships between self-efficacy beliefs in three distinct domains of caregiving and cumulative health risk associated with health behavior patterns. **Results:** Higher levels of self-efficacy for Obtaining Respite and self-efficacy for Controlling Upsetting Thoughts were found to be related to reduced health risk. **Discussion:** These findings suggest that caregivers who believe that they can remove themselves from the stresses of caregiving and who can manage the distorted cognitions often associated with caregiving may experience tangible benefits in health behaviors and, ultimately, improved physical health.

Keywords: *self-efficacy; predictors of health; health behaviors*

Current estimates indicate that the number of individuals who suffer from Alzheimer's disease (AD) and Related Dementias (ADRD) in the United States is expected to increase dramatically over the next half century (Ory, Yee, Tennstedt, & Schulz, 2000). The degenerative nature of AD renders