

Death and dying with dementia in nursing homes: A burden for nursing staff?

Gwenda Albers^a, Robert Vander Stichele^{a, b}, Lieve Van den Block^a, on behalf of EUROIMPACT

^a End-of-Life Care Research Group, Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB) & Ghent University, Brussels, Belgium

^b Heymans Institute of Pharmacology, Ghent University, Ghent, Belgium



BACKGROUND

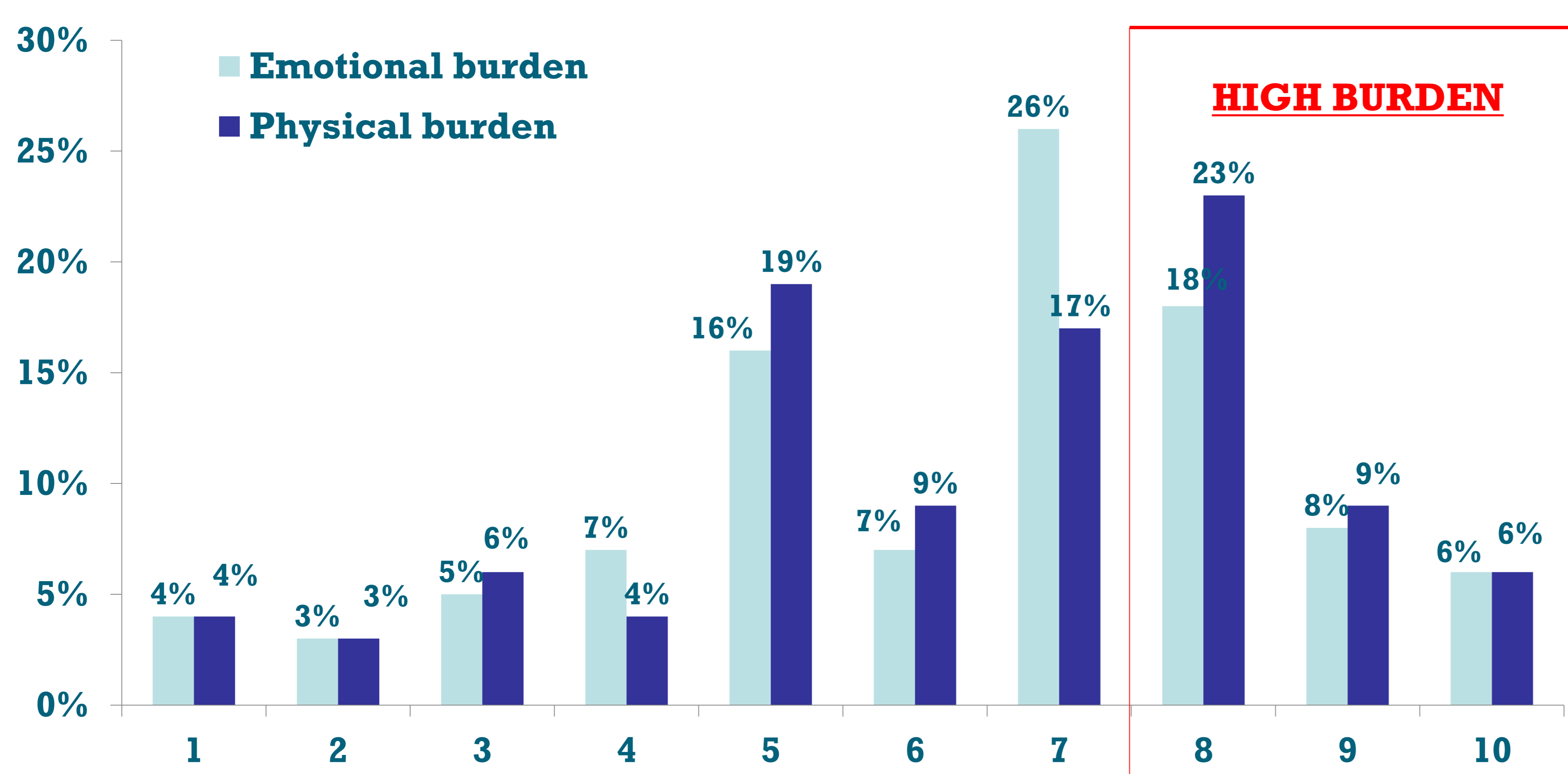
- ❖ An increasing number of people with dementia is living their final phase of life in a nursing home
- ❖ Providing end-of-life care can put high emotional and physical demands on nursing staff
- ❖ High burden can effect staff turnover which negatively impacts quality of care

A POST-DEATH SURVEY

- ❖ About experiences with providing end-of-life care for nursing home resident who died with dementia
- ❖ Among 198 nurses (88% response rate)
- ❖ In Flanders, Belgium (2010)

BURDEN AMONG NURSING STAFF

The extent to which nursing staff perceive caring for people with dementia at the end of life as a emotional/physical burden – scored on a 10-point scale



- In **one-third** of cases nurses perceived **high** emotional and/or physical **burden**
- **Emotional burden** more often perceived when resident has **decision-making capacity** or when **staff** is involved in **decision-making process** at the end of life
- **Physical burden** more often perceived when resident has **poorer clinical status**

CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY ADVICE

- ❖ Nurses feel engaged and emotionally involved
- ❖ We recommend support for nurses to optimize end-of-life care for people with dementia through:
 - **Monitoring levels of burden** as part of continuous quality improvement in nursing home
 - **Training in interpersonal skills and communication, reflection on advance care planning and dying** to help nurses in discussions about end-of-life care wishes with relatives
 - **Regular reflective debriefing sessions, group supervision, individual coaching or supervision**

TO READ MORE: Albers G, Van den Block L, Vander Stichele R. The burden of caring for people with dementia at the end of life in nursing homes: a post death study among nursing staff. *Int J Older People Nurs.* 2014 May 10

Contact | gwenda.albers@vub.ac.be

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