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Alfred E. Mann School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences

Background

- Due to global aging, there is a rising number of people living with dementia, most of whom rely on support from caregivers
- Donepezil, a dementia medication, is known to induce agitation and aggressive behavior as a side effect
- The impact of these aggressive behaviors on caregivers of dementia patients has not been sufficiently researched

Research Objective

The objective of this case study was to understand what implications medication-related aggression may have on the caregiver's well being

Methods

Parent study (Better Together: Dementia Care Study) approved by IRB# HS-19-00282

Parent Study

- Study on conflict within dementia caregiving
- Enrolled caregivers of persons living with all types of dementia
- Conducted 90-minute 1-on-1 semi-structured interviews, which were recorded and transcribed

Case Study Sample

Number of participants: 1

- One participant was selected for this case study, who had experienced aggression following the initiation of donepezil
- Caregiver, CK, was a 66-year-old female, caring for her husband of 37 years, a 67-year old male
- · CK had been providing care for roughly six years

Case Study Design

Secondary analysis of an interview transcript

Data Analysis

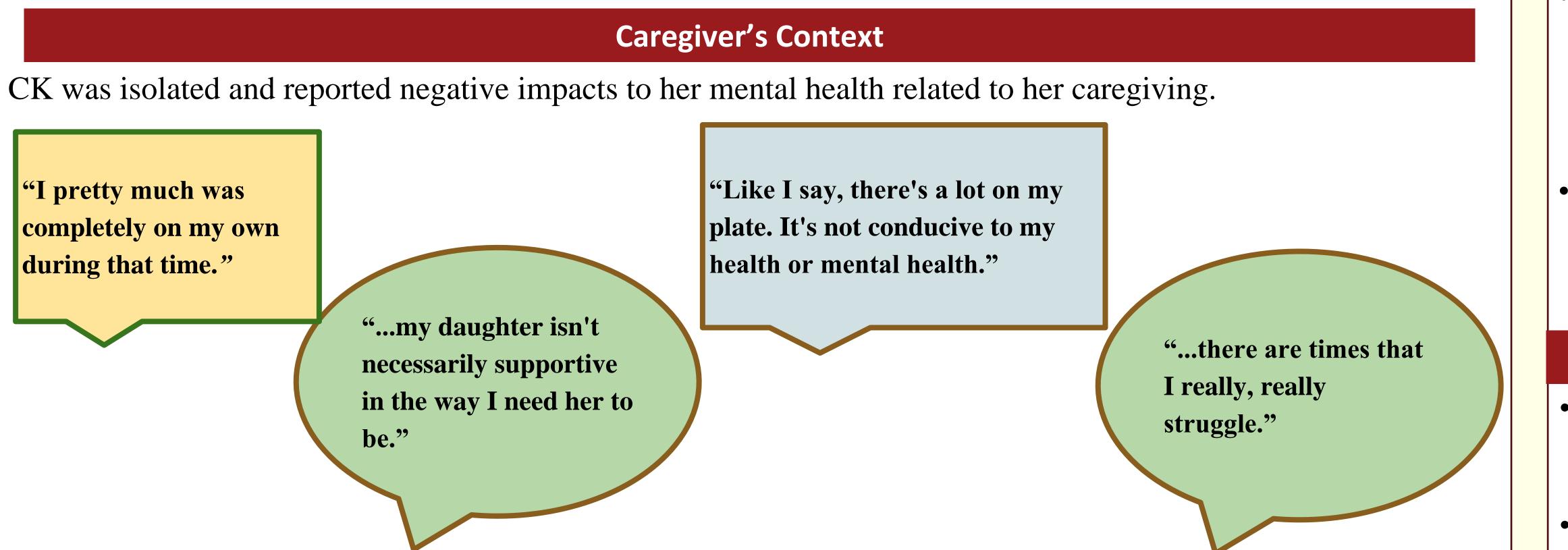
- Qualitative Content Analysis
- A analysis of the interview transcript, intended to: (1) search for themes, (2) define themes, and (3) provide analytical write-up

Exploring A Dementia Caregiver's Experience: A Case Study of Medication-Related Aggression Patricia Oto, PharmD candidate

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Zach Gassoumis, PhD.

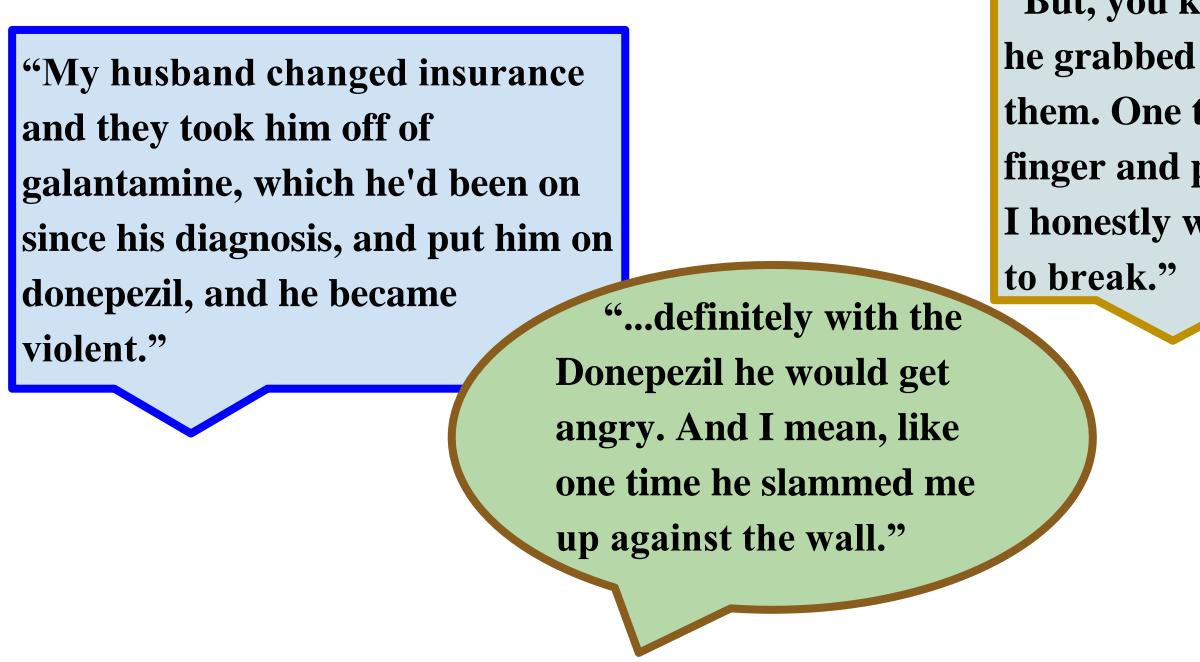
Results

Three themes emerged during analysis: (1) CK's context related to her caregiving at the time of the donepezil prescription; (2) CK's comments related to her husband's aggression following the donepezil initiation; and (3) **CK's reaction** to the aggression, regarding the events and her thoughts on initiating donepezil in the first place.



Medication-Related Aggression

The aggression exhibited by CK's husband was jarring to CK and escalated over time, eventually resulting in a hospital visit related to injuries he inflicted on her.



Caregiver's Reaction

The idea of her husband's aggression being linked to the donepezil caused distress in CK, and made her regret agreeing to have the donepezil initiated.

"The donepezil, I had a long talk with the doctor before we ever, you know, put him on that. And, you know, he assured me it's like, oh, no, it's just the same as galantamine. No, everything will be fine."

"I would never have even thought that there would be a problem. You know, I was just afraid of him going off the galantamine, not have him going on to something different."

"But, you know, a couple of times he grabbed my arms and twisted them. One time he grabbed one finger and pulled it back to where I honestly was afraid it was going

"An Alzheimer's care coordinator found out and said, oh, yeah, take him off of it now. Don't give him another pill."

"Ugh! Donepezil."

"I would think that the neurologist would have mentioned something like that. And he said nothing."

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Discussion

e literature focuses on donepezil's linkage to gressive behaviors and highlights case studies out the aggression occurring.

e impact of these aggressive behaviors on the regiver was severe in this case study, which rrants greater consideration of the impact this escription may have on a dementia patient's oport system.

hile aggression can occur in all people living th dementia, this did not mitigate CK attributing ese behaviors to donepezil once she was made vare of this potential side effect.

Conclusions/Next Steps

ith highly impactful side effects, prescribing actitioners should take care to ensure a patient th dementia's care team is well informed. ditional caregiver-focused research into the pact of medication-related aggression could be great benefit to improving caregiver well-being.

Limitations

ta represents the opinions and experiences of an dividual participating in a larger study and may be representative of other caregivers in the ne situation.

nited sample size: one nnot demonstrate cause and effect

References

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