

# CAREGIVER PERCEPTIONS: DIAGNOSIS & TREATMENT OF ALZHEIMER'S AND RELATED DISORDERS IN LONG TERM CARE FACILITIES

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## Introduction

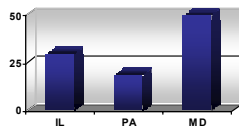
Alzheimer's disease (AD) is estimated to affect approximately 4 million Americans, and this number is expected to rise as the percentage of population over 65 years of age increases<sup>1</sup>. In skilled nursing facilities (SNF's) it is reported that approximately 10% of residents admitted carry a "mental disorders" diagnosis and the majority of these have AD<sup>2</sup>.

## Methods

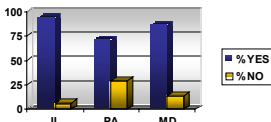
As part of an educational presentation given to long term care (LTC) caregivers on AD assessment skills and care planning, a 16 question pre-program questionnaire was completed by 133 attendees at presentations in 3 states. Of the 133 respondents, 57.2% were licensed nurses while the remaining 42.8% held various direct care and administrative positions within the facilities (case management, administration, therapists, social services, activities, CNA, medical records). A total of 65.7% worked in SNF's, 16.6% in assisted living facilities and 17.7% in other facilities (rehab or hospital based SNF/TCU). The purpose of the questionnaire was to collect subjective data about the diagnosis and treatment of AD residents in the LTC setting. A summary of selected findings are highlighted here.

## Results

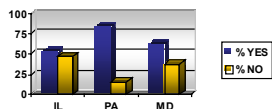
Reported percentage of residents diagnosed with some degree of AD



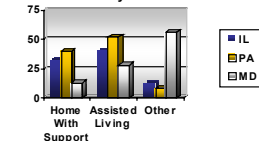
Are there additional un-diagnosed Alzheimer's Disease patients?



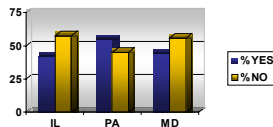
Are there discharge options in the community for residents with mild to moderate AD?



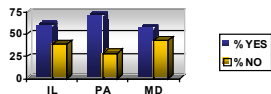
Reported discharge options available in the community for AD residents



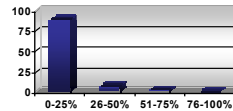
Do your care plans for residents with AD include discharge plans?



If suitable discharge options & supports were readily available, would more residents with AD be discharged?



What % of AD residents could be discharged if options and supports existed in the community?



## Summary

Participants report that between 19-50% of residents in their facilities are diagnosed with AD and a majority also report there may be additional residents who have AD but who have not been formally diagnosed. Between 16-47% of participants report that there are no suitable discharge options in their community for residents with AD, and 45-58% report that their care plans *do not* include discharge plans. Over 50% of participants report if discharge options existed, more residents with AD would be discharged to the community.

## Conclusions

The respondents indicate that AD may be under-diagnosed and residents in LTC facilities may have care plans that lack adequate discharge planning. Furthermore, they indicate a need for more community support systems to allow discharge back into the community. Further research is required to determine if adequate AD testing, diagnosis and optimal drug treatment is being provided in the LTC setting.

## References

- Evans DA, Scherr PA, Cook NR, et al. Estimated prevalence of Alzheimer's disease in the United States. Milbank Q 1990;68:267-289
- American Health Care Association Facts & Trends: The Nursing Facility Source Book

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