

PRESS RELEASE

FSU College of Medicine researchers seek caregivers for depression-reduction study

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With a rapidly expanding population of elders, the number of dementia caregivers in Florida is increasing exponentially. Finding the best way to support them, especially with fewer state resources available, is the focus of ongoing research at the Florida State University College of Medicine. The researchers are looking for 40 to 45 African-American caregivers to complete their study. As a reward for their participation, caregivers will receive up to \$100 — and, judging from the early results, they also will benefit psychologically, physically and spiritually.



Robert Glueckauf, Ph.D.

The study, which has been under way for more than a year, is being conducted by Robert Glueckauf, professor of medical humanities and social sciences. Awarded a three-year, \$743,000 grant from the National Institutes of Health, Glueckauf is heading the African-American Alzheimer’s Caregiver Training and Support (ACTS) project. The 12-week program provides skills training and support to African-American dementia caregivers with depression, either by phone or face to face. ACTS helps caregivers find creative ways to improve difficult caregiving problems and, at the same time, enhance their own emotional well-being and physical health. The primary purpose of the study is to compare the effects of telephone-based versus face-to-face cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT), an evidence-based, skills-building and support program. Early participants’ outcomes indicated that both modes of therapy were equally effective and led to substantial reduction in depression and anxiety, as well as improvement in caregivers’ physical health. “The pilot study results were very promising,” Glueckauf said, “but they are preliminary. It will be important to confirm whether the current trends in the data hold at the mid- and final phases of the study.” The study to date includes 75 adult African-American caregivers and involves researchers from Florida State University, Tallahassee Memorial HealthCare, Mayo Clinic in Jacksonville and James Madison University in Virginia. African-American adults who live within 60 to 70 miles of Tallahassee or Jacksonville, including South Georgia, and who care for a loved one with dementia at least six hours a day are eligible to participate. For more information, contacting the ACTS project staff at (850) 645-2745 or (866) 778-2724 (toll-free), or e-mail william.davis@med.fsu.edu.