



Research on Adult Day Services: Studies Conducted at Penn State University

Starting about 20 years ago, our research team at Penn State, with the support of Rick Greene of the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services, and colleagues at Kent State University, began work that examined the benefits of ADS for family caregivers of persons with dementia and for the ADS participants themselves. These studies were funded by the National Institute on Aging and the National Institute of Mental Health.

- Study 1, the Adult Day Care Collaborative Study, looked at family caregivers of people with dementia who were enrolling a relative with dementia in an ADS program in New Jersey. They were compared to a similar group of family caregivers in another state that did not at the time have many ADS program. The results showed that family caregivers who used ADS experienced lower care-related stress and depressive symptoms after 3 months of use, compared to the comparison group that did not use ADS. Benefits of ADS were still evident after 1 year. This was the first study to demonstrate clearly **that ADS is effective** in helping reduce stress on family caregivers.
 - Zarit, S. H., Stephens, M.A.P., Townsend, A., & Greene, R. (1998). Stress reduction for family caregivers: Effects of day care use. *Journal of Gerontology: Social Sciences*, 53B, S267-S277.
- As part of Study 1, we examined whether caregivers were satisfied with the ADS program they were using, and if they had encountered problems using ADS. Caregivers were overwhelmingly positive in their evaluation of the programs their relatives attended. They reported that their relative benefited from the stimulation and social interactions at the programs. Caregivers were also asked about a set of problems that people often worry about when they are thinking about sending a relative to an ADS program, such as difficulty getting the person to go to the program, or that the person would be more difficult to manage at the end of the day. Only a few caregivers experienced these kinds of problems.
 - Jarrott, S. E., Zarit, S. H., Stephens, M. A. P., Townsend, A., & Greene, R. (1999). Caregiver satisfaction with adult day service programs. *American Journal of Alzheimer's Disease*, 14, 233-244.
- One of the goals of ADS is to help families keep a relative at home for as long as possible, without having to turn care over to a nursing home or assisted living facility. We followed the participants in Study 1 for a 2 year period after they first enrolled their relative into an ADS program. We found that when daughters were the primary

caregiver, use of an ADS program was associated with a delay in placing their parent into a nursing home. When a wife was the primary caregiver of her husband, placement actually occurred sooner with ADS use. These results suggest that daughters and wives may benefit differently from ADS use.

- Cho, S., Zarit, S. H., & Chiriboga, D. A. (2009). Wives and daughters: Differential risk factors in the nursing home placement of cognitively impaired family members. *Gerontologist, 49*, 57-67.
- Caregivers in Study 1 told us that their relative appeared to benefit from using ADS, including being more alert and easier to manage after spending the day at an ADS program. Study 2, the Family CARES study, was designed specifically to examine the possible benefits that people with dementia might receive from using an ADS program. We found that ADS use lowers rates of some dementia-related **behavior problems** over time, compared to a control group not using ADS. Improvements in behavior are related to positive changes in well-being among caregivers.
- Study 2 also found that family caregivers experience 66 percent less care-related stress on days that their relative uses ADS, compared to days they do not use ADS.
 - Femia, E. E., Zarit, S. H., Stephens, M. A. P., & Greene, R. (2007). Impact of adult day services on behavioral and psychological symptoms of dementia. *The Gerontologist, 47*, 775-788.
 - Zarit, S. H., Femia, E. E., Kim, K., & Savla, J. (2009, Nov.). Daily stress and well-being of caregivers. Presented at the meetings of the Gerontological Society of America, Atlanta, GA.