Alzheimer's: The Invisible Second Victim

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Introduction:

- Alzheimer’s Disease or (AD) is a progressive illness that destroys memories of those affected.
- Family members are the most common home caregivers for Alzheimer's patients.
- Family members must manage the treatment of the patient while also managing their own emotions towards the diagnosis of a loved one with AD.

Sources:

Research Findings:

- Providing Long-term care can lead to physical ailments.
- Decisions made by the family can be emotionally draining.
- Strong caregiver-patient relationships often have strong levels of mutuality and reciprocity.
- The average annual cost of a nursing home stay was $92,738 and the total average cost of dementia was found to be $287,038.
- AD currently affects over five million American families.
- Over 11 million Americans provide unpaid care for those with AD.
- These caregivers provided over 16 billion hours of unpaid care.

Conclusion:

- The effects of AD on family members is often overlooked and ignored by the research of the disease itself.
- There is still no cure for Alzheimer’s.
- The progressive nature of Alzheimer’s means that it can last anywhere from three to twenty years, meaning the caregiver may have to provide care for up to twenty years.
- Family is often at risk of social isolation.
- Counseling can help families provide higher quality care for a longer time.

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Normal Brain  Advanced Alzheimer’s

Alzheimer’s causes severe brain atrophy which causes the patient to lose their memories of their loved ones.

Many caregivers are the spouse of the patient with AD.