

Informal caregivers of elderly patients in France: their behavior and knowledge as trusted person

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Abstract

In France, the trusted person arrangement allows the elderly patients' voices to be heard even after the onset of cognitive decline. Our study aims to assess informal caregivers' inclination to legally become designated trusted persons, their likelihood of assuming the trusted person role without formal designation, their comprehension of the concept, and the influencing factors that contribute to trusted person behavior and the completion of formal designation formalities. We conduct an online survey on informal caregivers of elderly patients, based on a panel representative of the French population of 134 caregivers of patients over 65 years old. Our results reveal that most caregivers act as trusted persons, yet formal appointments are not consistently made. While caregivers comprehend the essential tasks of trusted third parties, such as conveying medical wishes and offering advice, confusion persists regarding related terms. Awareness of the procedures for appointing trusted persons is lacking, with hospitals emerging as the most effective source of information. Surprisingly, legal knowledge does not significantly influence observed behaviors, whereas the intensity of assistance correlates with a higher likelihood of assuming the trusted person role. The widespread lack of formalization prompts consideration of potential legal system reforms.

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