

## EXTENDED ABSTRACT

### Family Caregiving to the Elderly: Positive Experiences of Caregivers in Two Urban Poor Communities in Accra, Ghana

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**Background:** In Ghana and other sub-Saharan African countries, the family is primarily responsible for the care and support of the elderly. Research has established that family caregivers of the elderly can experience both positive and negative outcomes from caregiving. However, most studies on family caregiving to the elderly have mainly focused on negative outcomes of caregiving to the detriment of positive outcomes. In addition, family caregiving roles and responsibilities are often shared by family members. However, most studies on family caregiving to the elderly have focused on primary caregivers to the neglect of secondary caregivers.

**Aims:** This study explored the rewards family caregivers (primary and secondary caregivers) derived from caring for the elderly.

**Methods:** This study is part of a larger research project on experiences of family caregiver (both primary and secondary caregivers) and their elderly care recipients. Thirty-one family caregivers (15 primary caregivers and 16 secondary caregivers) were purposely recruited and interviewed in two urban communities (James Town and Ussher Town) in Accra. The interviews were audio taped, transcribed and analysed thematically.

**Setting:** This study was conducted in James Town and Ussher Town located in Central Accra, Ghana. James Town and Ussher Town are also known as Ga Mashie which is an indigenous Ga community and one of the poorest communities in Accra, Ghana. It is one of

the oldest communities in Accra, and fishing and petty-trading are the major occupations in Ga Mashie.

**Results:** Family caregivers were aged between 21 and 76 years, and the majority of family caregivers were females. Secondary caregivers were older (45.9 years) than primary caregivers (44.9 years). Nine themes regarding rewards were identified: gifts, blessing, skills acquisition, honour, enhanced personal attribute, asset, access to accommodation, family cohesion, and health consciousness.

**Conclusion:** This study has provided insight on the positive outcomes of caregiving to the elderly. This study could help researchers and policymakers to gain a better understanding of experiences of family caregivers. With a better understanding of the experiences of family caregivers, it could help to design programmes, and interventions to mitigate the challenges faced by family caregivers and to enhance the positive outcomes of caregiving to promote the wellbeing of family caregivers and their elderly care recipients.