



## Active caregiving may offer positives

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BUFFALO, N.Y., June 25 (UPI) -- Those who actively help an elderly relative or sick spouse may be helping themselves feel better, a U.S. researcher suggests.

Michael Poulin of the University of Buffalo in New York says long-term care of disabled loved ones has been recognized as a threat to caregiver health and quality of life but in some contexts, helping loved ones may help the well being of the helpers.

Poulin and colleagues find caregivers who engaged in "active care" -- such as feeding, bathing and toileting -- experienced more positive emotions and fewer negative emotions.

The study, published in *Psychology and Aging*, finds caretakers experienced fewer positive and more negative emotions when giving passive care -- especially passive monitoring of the patient.

"Our data don't tell us exactly what psychological processes are responsible," Poulin says in a statement, "but we hypothesize that people may be hardwired so that actively attending to the concrete needs and feelings of others reduces our personal anxiety."

The study had 73 caregivers -- ranging in age from 35-89 years -- carry Palm Pilots that randomly signaled them to report on activities, time spent actively helping and/or being on call and their emotional state.

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