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Caring for sick spouse or relative may be good for care-giver

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Washington, June 23 (ANI): Contrary to earlier studies, a new research claims that caretakers who look after sick spouses or the elderly may be doing good to themselves too.

University at Buffalo psychologist Michael Poulin, PhD, finds that in some contexts, helping valued loved ones may promote the well being of helpers. His team closely analysed helping behavior and well-being among 73 spousal caregivers, many of them elderly.

They learned that despite the burdensome nature of their role, caregivers experience more positive emotions and fewer negative emotions when they engage in "active care" like feeding, bathing, toileting and otherwise physically caring for the spouse.

Passive care, on the other hand, which requires the spouse to simply be nearby in case anything should go wrong, provokes negative emotions in the caretaker.

"Overall, we wouldn't say that caring for an ailing loved one is going to be good for you or healthy for you, but certain activities may be beneficial, especially in high-quality relationships," Poulin says.

He adds that government or other agencies should provide the right relief at the right time perhaps less time off from active care duties, and more time off from the onerous task of passively monitoring an ailing loved one.

The study is published in the journal Psychology and Aging. (ANI)