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The Role of the Caregiver in Health and Social Care: The Importance of Caring for the Caregiver

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Message from the Guest Editor

Chronic patients experience a progressive loss of autonomy and a need for support in managing symptoms and treatment, dealing with side effects, communicating with health professionals, emotional care, and, in the most severe cases, in carrying out the tasks of daily life . Most of the time, it is a family member who takes responsibility for a chronic patient's care.

Informal caregivers are responsible for meeting the physical and emotional needs of the people they care for. This may be a demanding experience that has been linked by several studies to serious physical and emotional consequences, including somatic symptoms, depression, anxiety, loneliness, and stress. In addition, it is common for caregivers to experience work, social, and economic problems and a poorer quality of life compared to non-caregivers.

Health care continues to be focused on an acute disease model and is not fully prepared to meet the needs of patients living with one or more chronic conditions. In addition, it focuses on patients' outcomes without considering the needs of their family caregivers, even though the caregiver's well-being has been shown to be related to the health of the person they are caring for.

This Special Issue aims to highlight the importance of the caregiver's role, underscoring the urgency of developing new metrics to assess their needs as well as programs and interventions to support their fundamental role in health and social care.

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Message from the Editor-in-Chief

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