

Factors Influencing Crowdfunding Donations for Patients with Dementia

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Background

- ❖ With about 5.7 million people living with dementia in the United States, the cost of dementia care keeps rising ¹
- ❖ A 2015 cost analysis study estimated the total lifetime cost of care for a person with dementia to be \$321,780; this was twice the amount for those without dementia ²
- ❖ People have resorted to medical crowdfunding to fund dementia care ³
- ❖ What remains unknown are success factors of online crowdfunding campaigns for patients living with Dementia in the United States.

Study Aim

To identify factors associated with successful, online, crowdfunded campaigns for patients living with dementia in the United States

Methods

- ❖ A cross-sectional study of a random sample of publicly available crowdfunding pages was conducted for posts related to dementia
- ❖ The largest crowdfunding page as at the time of this study was utilized (GoFundMe®)
- ❖ Python v3.7.3 was utilized to conduct an initial web search of all campaigns including the term 'dementia' on September 12, 2021
- ❖ The data was formatted into a comma-separated value file
- ❖ Four independent reviewers were assigned to manually read each page to assess for eligibility based on four criteria
- ❖ Campaigns were included if they were focused on patient or caregiver of patient with dementia, an active campaign, located in the U.S, and posted in the English language
- ❖ Some of the data extracted are included in the table below.
- ❖ Pearson's chi-square test and student's t test was utilized respectively to test for Statistical significance set at p<0.05 (two-tailed)
- ❖ Data analysis was accomplished using SAS v9.4 (SAS institute, Cary, NC).

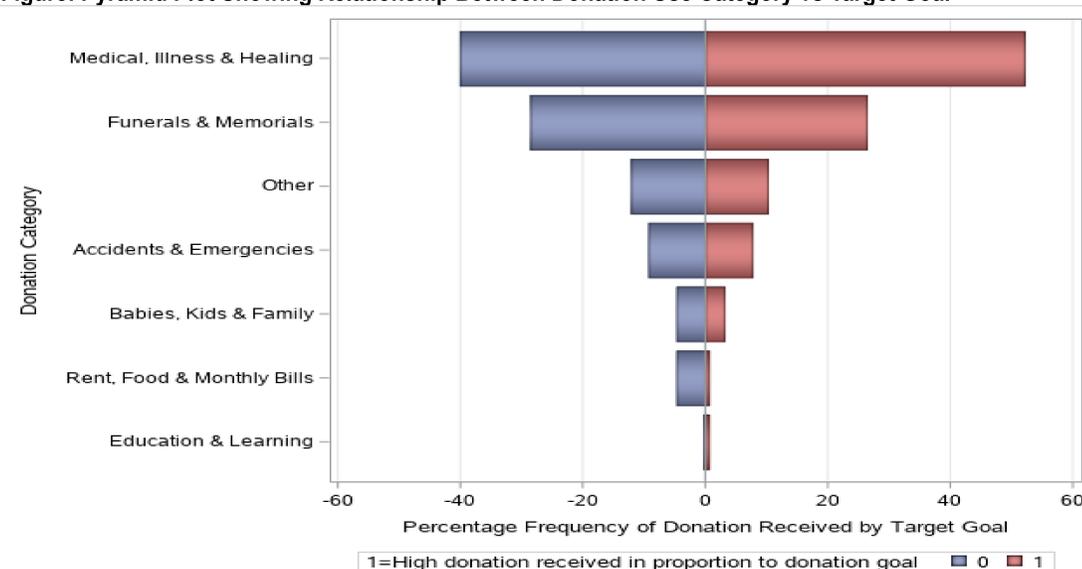
Principal Findings

- ❖ A total of 5,899 campaigns mentioned the word 'dementia' of which a convenience sample of 2,248 were assessed manually for inclusion. 789 campaigns were included for analysis
- ❖ The upper quartile (Q3) of the ratio between donation received and donation goal was 66.7% this was used to split the results into high and low donation categories
- ❖ Average donation received by high donation category and S.E was \$8610±688 while low donation category was \$2550±187
- ❖ Patients in the racial minority were less likely to have a medical crowdfunding page and donations
- ❖ Factors associated with successful crowdfunding include longer post duration, more donors, more post sharing, more post updates, increased comments, and patients being in the racial majority

Table: Descriptive Statistics of Patients Who Sought Medical Crowdfunding for Dementia Care

| Parameters | Sub-parameters | Total Population n=789 | High Donation n=198 | Low Donation n=591 | P |
|---------------------------------|----------------|---------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|--------|
| Post Duration (days) Mean(SE) | | 709 (27) | 938 (53) | 632 (31) | <.0001 |
| Patient Pronoun n(%) | He/His | 338 (42.84%) | 95 (47.98%) | 243 (41.12%) | 0.1191 |
| | She/Her | 446 (56.53%) | 103 (52.02%) | 343 (58.04%) | |
| | Other/None | 5 (0.63%) | 0 (0%) | 5 (0.85%) | |
| Patient BIPOC n(%) | Likely Yes | 174 (22.05%) | 31 (15.66%) | 143 (24.2%) | 0.0121 |
| | Likely No | 615 (77.95%) | 167 (84.34%) | 448 (75.8%) | |
| Donation Received (\$) Mean(SE) | | 4071 (241) | 8610 (688) | 2550 (187) | <.0001 |
| Donors Mean(SE) | | 22 (2) | 75 (5) | 24 (2) | <.0001 |
| Post shares Mean(SE) | | 164 (12) | 280 (36) | 125 (10) | <.0001 |
| Post updates Mean(SE) | | 2 (0.18) | 3.13 (0.53) | 1.62 (0.15) | 0.0003 |
| Word count Mean(SE) | | 338 (10) | 374 (22) | 327 (13) | 0.0576 |
| Comments Mean(SE) | | 6.7 (0.45) | 12.66 (1.24) | 4.7 (0.42) | <.0001 |
| Comorbidities n(%) | None | 245 (31.05%) | 55 (27.78%) | 190 (32.15%) | 0.25 |
| | ≥1 | 544 (68.95%) | 143 (72.22%) | 401 (67.85%) | |
| Cost beyond patient n(%) | Yes | 335 (42.46%) | 78 (39.39%) | 257 (43.49%) | 0.3134 |
| | No | 454 (57.54%) | 120 (60.61%) | 334 (56.51%) | |
| Costs n(%) | Medical | 156 (19.77%) | 46 (23.23%) | 110 (18.61%) | 0.3606 |
| | Non-Medical | 373 (47.28%) | 89 (44.95%) | 284 (48.05%) | |
| | Both | 239 (30.29%) | 60 (30.3%) | 179 (30.29%) | |
| | None | 21 (2.66%) | 3 (1.52%) | 18 (3.05%) | |
| Category n(%) | Alive | 568 (73.7%) | 146 (73.74%) | 422 (71.4%) | 0.5269 |
| | Dead | 221 (28.01%) | 52 (26.26%) | 169 (28.6%) | |
| Relationship n(%) | Family | 602 (76.3%) | 142 (71.72%) | 460 (77.83%) | 0.0798 |
| | | 187 (23.7%) | 56 (28.28%) | 131 (22.17%) | |

Figure: Pyramid Plot Showing Relationship Between Donation Use Category vs Target Goal



Conclusions

- ❖ Our study highlights the potential hardship associated with dementia care in the U.S
- ❖ Individuals have resorted to medical crowdfunding campaigns to finance the cost of treating/managing dementia
- ❖ Successful campaigns share characteristics that can increase publicity and motivate donors to spend their money
- ❖ Increased donation was observed for posts directly related to medical, illness & healing
- ❖ Racial disparities exist in medical crowdfunding

Policy/Practice Implications

- ❖ Strategies should be implemented to offset expenses for caregivers so they do not have to resort to using GoFundMe to cover additional costs related to caregiving
- ❖ Patients with dementia seeking help via medical crowdfunding platforms may be able to adopt some aspects of our findings to increase the success of their campaigns
- ❖ Data from crowdfunding sites can provide a rich source of information about patient and caregiver needs for researchers, patient advocates and policy makers

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