

Social Support, Social Participation, & Depression among Caregivers & Non-Caregivers in Canada

Jovana Sibalija, MSc, Marie Y. Savundranayagam, PhD, JB Orange, PhD, Marita Kloseck, PhD
Health & Rehabilitation Sciences, Western University, Canada

THEORETICAL AIMS & BACKGROUND

- **Research Aim:** To use population-level data from the Canadian Longitudinal Study on Aging (CLSA) to investigate the relationships among social support, social participation, and depression in caregivers and non-caregivers.
- Caregiving and the Stress Process (Pearlin et al., 1990).
- The Activity Restriction Model of Depressed Affect (Williamson & Schaffer, 2000).

METHOD

- Participants: 6,674 Canadians
- Data analyzed from the CLSA Wave 1 (Tracking) Telephone Interview Questionnaire
- Path analysis & analysis of variance (ANOVA)

Description of Sample

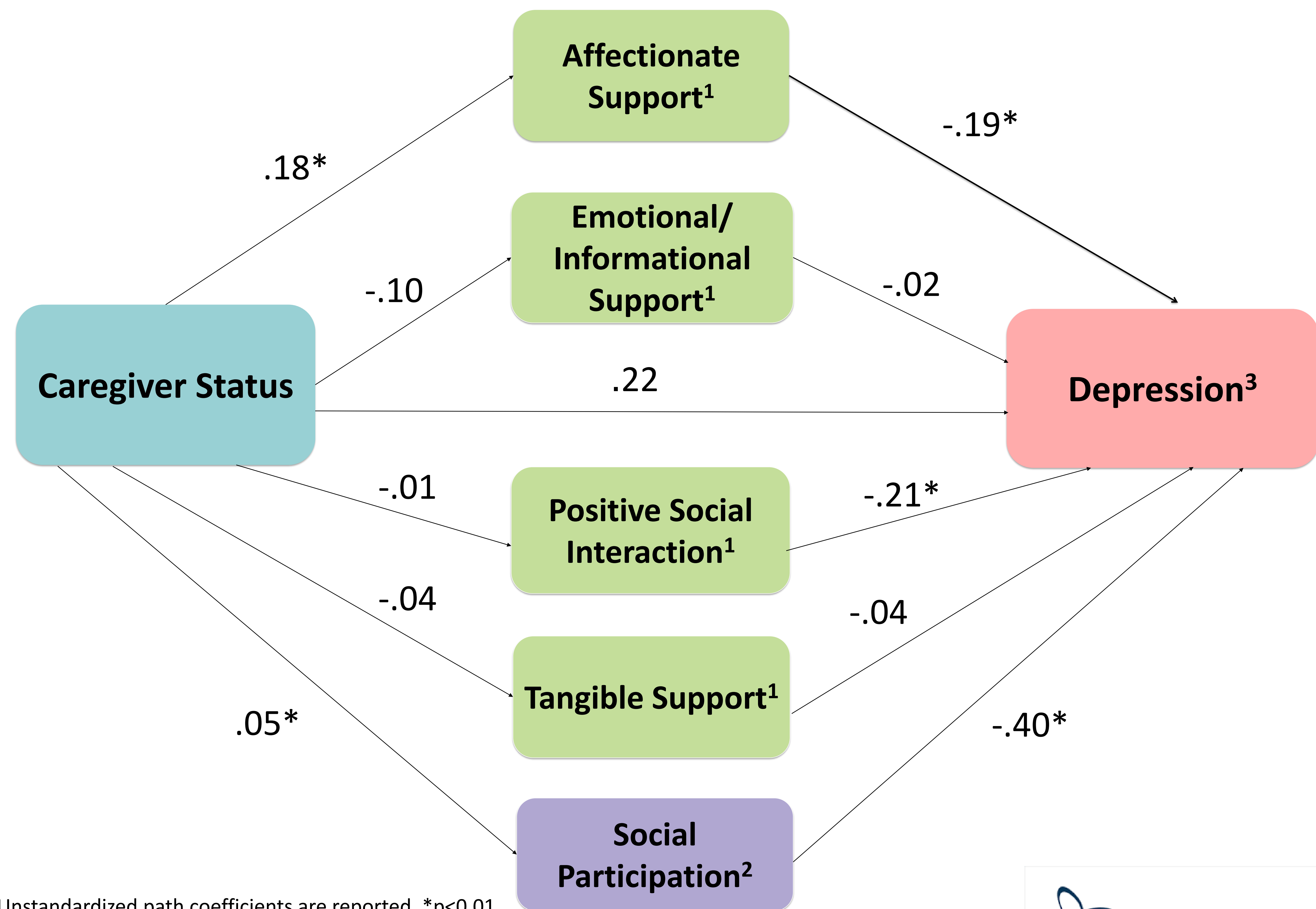
Variable	Non-Caregiver		Caregiver	
	M	SD	M	SD
Age	57.06	8.74	57.13	8.62
Perceived Health*	2.69	1.00	2.79	0.91
Perceived Mental Health	2.97	0.92	3.00	0.88
Affectionate Support*	10.47	2.39	10.78	1.96
Emotional/ Informational Support*	26.48	6.08	26.90	5.55
Positive Social Interaction*	13.20	3.14	13.43	2.84
Tangible Support	13.21	3.39	13.34	3.04
Social Participation*	2.92	0.65	3.00	0.61
Depression	5.36	4.82	5.28	4.60

Note: Asterisk denotes significant differences between the groups. *p<0.01

WHAT WE LEARNED:

- Affectionate support and social participation were significant mediators of the relationship between caregiver status and depression.
- Caregivers reported higher levels of social support and social participation versus non-caregivers.
- **Implications:** Health and social services should focus on providing caregivers with resources to foster positive social relationships and enhance social participation. Caregiver support strategies must consider the importance of social factors when addressing caregiver mental health.

FINDINGS



Note: Unstandardized path coefficients are reported. *p<0.01

¹Medical Outcomes Study Social Support Survey, $\alpha = 0.95$,

²Frequency of participation in community-related activities, $\alpha = 0.63$

³Ten-item short-form of the Center for Epidemiological Studies Depression Scale (CES-D), $\alpha = 0.77$

