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Dementia patients 'die early if carers are stressed'

◆ Dementia patients die more than a year prematurely if their carer is stressed, a study has shown.

University of California researchers tracked 176 patients after they were diagnosed in 2007 and measured the mental health of those who looked after them.

The study, published in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, found patients tended by carers with depression, anxiety and other symptoms of mental illness typically died 14 months sooner than others looked after by those in good mental health.

“[The study] highlights the mutual influence both parties’ mental and physical states have on one another,” said senior author Dr Robert Levenson.