

# Socioeconomic Predictors of the Employment of Migrant Care Workers by Italian Families Assisting Older Alzheimer's Disease Patients: Evidence From the Up-Tech Study

Francesco Barbabella,<sup>1</sup> Carlos Chiatti,<sup>2</sup> Joseph M. Rimland,<sup>2</sup> Maria Gabriella Melchiorre,<sup>1,3</sup> Giovanni Lamura,<sup>1</sup> and Fabrizia Lattanzio<sup>2</sup> on behalf of the Up-Tech Research Group

<sup>1</sup>Centre for Socio-Economic Research on Ageing, <sup>2</sup>Scientific Direction, and <sup>3</sup>Department of Gerontological

Research, Italian National Institute of Health and Science on Ageing (INRCA), Ancona, Italy.

Correspondence should be addressed to Joseph M. Rimland, PhD, Italian National Institute of Health and Science on Ageing (INRCA), Via S. Margherita 5, 60124 Ancona, Italy. E-mail: [j.rimland@inrca.it](mailto:j.rimland@inrca.it).

Received April 25 2014; Accepted May 11 2015.

**Decision Editor:** James Scott Brown, PhD

## Abstract

**Background.** The availability of family caregivers of older people is decreasing in Italy as the number of migrant care workers (MCWs) hired by families increases. There is little evidence on the influence of socioeconomic factors in the employment of MCWs.

**Method.** We analyzed baseline data from 438 older people with moderate Alzheimer's disease (AD), and their family caregivers enrolled in the Up-Tech trial. We used bivariate analysis and multilevel regressions to investigate the association between independent variables—education, social class, and the availability of a care allowance—and three outcomes—employment of a MCW, hours of care provided by the primary family caregiver, and by the family network (primary and other family caregivers).

**Results.** The availability of a care allowance and the educational level were independently associated with employing MCWs. A significant interaction between education and care allowance was found, suggesting that more educated families are more likely to spend the care allowance to hire a MCW.

**Discussion.** Socioeconomic inequalities negatively influenced access both to private care and to care allowance, leading disadvantaged families to directly provide more assistance to AD patients. Care allowance entitlement needs to be reformed in Italy and in countries with similar long-term care and migration systems.