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**SUPPORTING OLDER PEOPLE'S INFORMAL CAREGIVERS AT HOME THROUGH INCARE PROGRAMME: THE STUDY PROTOCOL**Odete Araújo<sup>1,a</sup>, José Cabrita<sup>1,b</sup>, Isabel Lage<sup>1,c</sup><sup>1</sup>*School of Nursing, University of Minho, Braga, Portugal*<sup>2</sup>*Faculty of Pharmacy, University of Lisbon, Lisboa, Portugal*

**Introduction:** More than 42% of older people (>65) have a stroke and almost all of them require help to self-care at home. Informal caregivers have reported several needs and dissatisfaction with technical and emotional support delivered by a community health team. Furthermore, empowering informal caregivers who take care of older stroke survivors is an important challenge, preventing negative outcomes in themselves, such as burden or anxiety, as well as depression, loss of physical function or hospitalization in older people. Evidence has also shown that telehealth interventions articulated with home visits may be an effective way to achieve health gains.

**Objective:** This pilot study aims at describing a protocol of an intervention based on training and telephone support delivered to informal caregivers who take care of older people after a stroke at home.

**Methods:** A single blinded randomized trial will include 156 eligible informal caregivers. The intervention will be delivered by a community nursing team one week, one and three months after a hospital discharge. In addition, telephone support, counseling caregivers on the 3rd, 6th, 8th and 10th week post discharge will be provided.

**Results/Conclusions:** Data collection started in February and will be concluded in October 2014. InCARE will be the first pilot study ever undertaken in Portugal. It will highlight new ways to support caregivers who take care of older people post-stroke. If successful, this study will be translational and it will also allow disseminate results all over the country and be implemented as a best practice.

**Descriptors:** stroke survivors; elderly; informal caregivers; empowerment; pilot study.

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