



Buffering Burden to Study Burden:

Living Labs as Temporary Care-Context Shifts for High-Demand Care Dyads

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High-demand care dyads are often hardest to reach precisely where innovation is most needed. Home-care research describes respite as temporary care by someone other than the primary caregiver, with benefit depending on flexibility of provider, timing, and access [1,2]. Dyadic evidence from adult day services suggests that such supported shifts can create lower-stress days and reduce spillover into caregiver fatigue and affect [1].

We argue that Living Labs for high-burden conditions should use temporary burden mitigation not only as support, but as research infrastructure. Moving dyads for limited periods from unbuffered home-care demands into buffered care contexts—such as respite-supported, home-like, or distributed field-evaluation settings—may enable co-creation, prototype testing, and intensive longitudinal observation for groups often filtered out of conventional studies [2,4].

The NASSS framework provides a perspective on this: when complexity accumulates across condition, technology, adopter system, organization, and wider context, participation and implementation become fragile [3]. Temporarily buffering parts of that complexity need not reduce ecological validity; it may make valid participation possible. Living Labs that offer temporary housing or respite-like support may therefore complement observational data and conventional trials by making needs, routines, and responses more observable in context. Repeated-measures designs should explicitly address within-person dependence, uneven compliance, and real-time burden [5].

References

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