Housework in the context of dementia: Division of work

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From focus on *caregiver burden* to focus on *couples and collaboration* as people with dementia live for many years in the community.
Couplehood in dementia:

* Couples as a collaborative unit
* Spouses try manage life and all changes due to the dementia disease together
* Interdependence: recognition that each partner is diminished without the other
Aim of study:

To explore the collaborative process, especially the dynamics of division of household work (cooking, driving, washing, do the dishes, repair, shopping, cleaning, laundry, gardening and financial management)
Method and participants:

- 15 couples
- Spouses (PWD and healthy spouses) between 57-86 years
- Relationships between 12-60 years
- Diagnosis: AD, vascular dementia, LBD
- The spouses interviewed together by two researchers and videotaped
- Semi-structured interviews: task oriented
- Repeated interviews (>3 years)
Interview question:

"Could you tell us about an ordinary day, for example yesterday. What did you do? Who did what?"
Findings:
* ”Traditional” gender roles before disease onset;
* ”Cohort effects”;
* Awareness of role norms and expectations - and changes.
* Slow change of division of work motivated by necessity;
* Sensitive issue (identity at stake);
* Few examples of others (children, professionals) taking over tasks
Comparison with Geraldine Boyle’s results in England
Conclusions:

* Division of household work is constantly negotiated;
* Spouses shift responsibilities in order to continue to function as a couple - pragmatic;
* Independence valued (less important with meals on wheels or other tasks).