

Perceived Stress, Ways of Coping and Care Giving Burden among Family Caregivers of Patients with Schizophrenia

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I. Introduction

Addressing perceived stress, ways of coping and care giving burden among family caregivers are highly relevant in the current scenario in terms of prevention of mental illness and promotion of mental health of people engaged in the care of their family member with schizophrenia. A community prevalence study conducted by the IMHANS, Kerala estimated that 3.2 lakh people in the State suffer from schizophrenia (THE HINDU, May 25, 2006).

Caring a mentally ill at home is a burden upon the family in terms of time, energy and finance, caring for a schizophrenic relative can increase the likelihood that the caregiver is at risk to develop symptoms of physical and mental illness. Depression, anxiety, drug and alcohol abuse are common to people who take care of relatives with schizophrenia (Szadmin, Stress on Family Caregivers, Recognition and Management, 2006).

Statement of the Problem

A study to assess the Perceived Stress, Ways of Coping and Care Giving Burden among family caregivers of patients with schizophrenia in selected psychiatric care setting at Calicut, Kerala

The objectives of the study were to:

- Assess the Perceived Stress among family caregivers of patients with schizophrenia using Perceived Stress Scale.
- Assess the Ways of Coping among family caregivers of patients with schizophrenia using Ways of Coping with Stress scale.
- Assess the Care Giving Burden among caregivers of patients with schizophrenia using Burden inventory
- Identify the correlation between perceived stress, ways of coping and care giving burden among family caregivers of patients with schizophrenia
- Determine the relationship of perceived stress, ways of coping and care giving burden with selected demographic variables among family caregivers of patients with schizophrenia.

Background of the problem:

Care giving is an important public health issue. The findings of a study on Family Care giving in Schizophrenia reveals that care givers experience severe distress regarding care of the patient with schizophrenia and they also used significantly more psychotropic medication and consulted their general practitioners more frequently (Schene. H.A, Wijngaarden.V.B, and Koeter M, 2011)

II. Methodology

Quantitative non-experimental approach with Descriptive Survey Design was selected for study. The sample consisted of 60 care givers (related to patient through blood, marriage or adoption) of patients with schizophrenia. The samples were selected through convenience sampling technique. The study includes, Caregivers of patients with schizophrenia who are able to read, understand, and respond to the tool provided, and who are in the process of caring their relative with schizophrenia not less than one year. The study excludes the Caregivers who are mentally ill and the Care givers who have been paid for their service. The study conducted in a psychiatric care centre at Calicut.

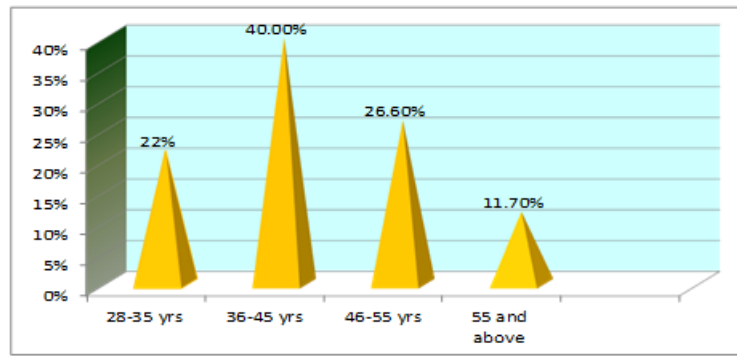
Data Collection Tools and Technique:

Demographic Proforma, Perceived Stress Scale, Folkman's Ways of Coping scale and Zarit's Care Giving Burden Inventory. The technique used was self reporting.

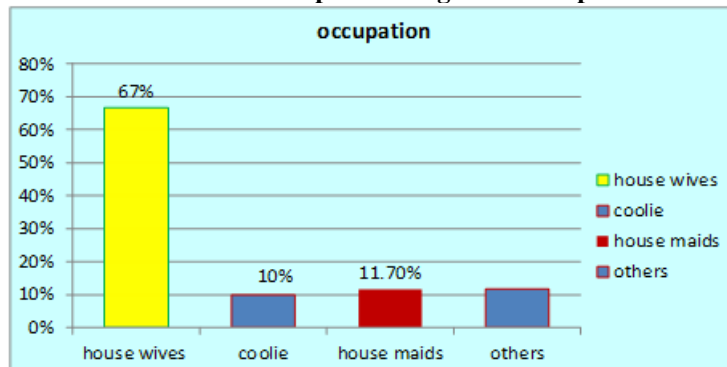
Data Analysis: The collected data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics using spss version 17.

III. Results

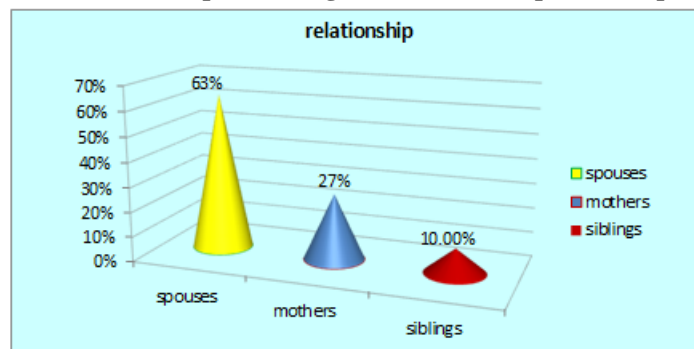
Distribution of sample according to age



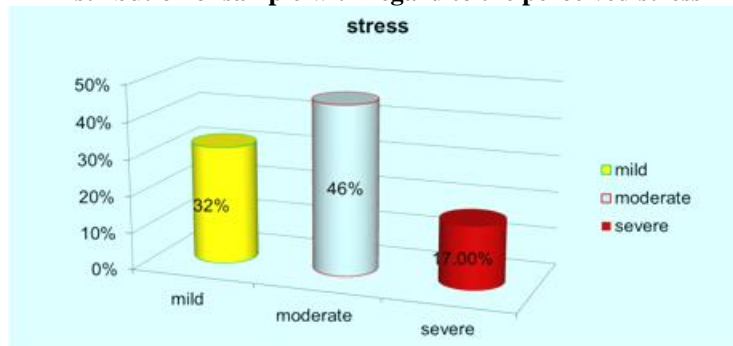
Distribution of sample with regard to occupation



Distribution of sample with regard to relationship with the patient



Distribution of sample with regard to the perceived stress



Distribution of sample according to care giving Burden

Grading	Range	Frequency	Percentage
No burden	0-22	2	3
Mild burden	23- 46	7	11.7
Moderate burden	47-66	11	18.3
Severe burden	67- 88	40	67

Correlation between stress and selected demographic variables

Variable	r	p	Inference
Stress	0.286	0.027 *	Significant
Age			
Stress	- 0.258	0.047*	Significant
Income			
Stress	0.299	0.020*	Significant
Duration of caring			

Majority of the caregivers were females (82%) and were housewives 67%. Caregivers experience perceived stress (mild to severe). Among 60 sample 40 care givers (67%) experience severe burden in caring their relative. 8.33% of caregivers were on treatment for physical illness such as Diabetes mellitus and Hypertension. The study reveals that majority (72%) of the care givers used distancing and seeking social support as their coping strategies. There were no correlation between perceived stress, ways of coping and care giving burden among caregivers of patients with schizophrenia. There were significant negative correlation between income and perceived stress ($r = - 0.258$). Study reveals a significant positive correlation between perceived stress and age($r= 0.286$), and duration of caring ($r = 0.299$).

IV. Interpretation And Conclusion

The findings of this study urge the mental health care professionals to be actively involved in prevention of mental illness and promotion of mental health through the assessment of stress perceived by the caregivers of mentally ill in order to help them to be resilient and use more constructive coping strategies in stressful situations.

Implications

Identifying the perceived stress, Ways of Coping and Care Giving Burden among family caregivers of patients with major mental illness like schizophrenia help the health care professional to empower the care givers in managing their stress effectively, and practice constructive ways of coping as a part of prevention of mental illness and promotion of mental health.

Reference

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