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A Study to Assess the Perception of Stress among the Caregiver of Mentally Ill Patients

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Abstract

Mental disorders not only have a significant negative influence on the health and well-being of the individual suffering from the disorder, but also on the health and well-being of their families and the entire community. Stress is a common problem for people with mental illness as well as their families and carers. The purpose of this study is to investigate the levels of stress experienced by caregivers while providing assistance to patients suffering from mental illness. Study carried out at tertiary care hospital in Karad city using descriptive survey method and data collected using convenient sampling technique. 100 caregivers of mentally ill patients were included in the study, and a structured four-point rating scale consisting of 22 questions was used to assess perception of stress level Results: amongst the 100 samples, 73% of caregivers are facing moderate stress level, and only 27% has mild stress; not a single caregiver is stress-free. Conclusion- The caretakers of mentally ill patients have a level of stress that ranges from mild to moderate; therefore, steps should be taken to alleviate the stress experienced by caregivers.

1. Introduction

Stress is a person's overall reaction to demands or pressures from the outside

world. Stress can be caused by anything that a person sees as a threat to his or her resources or ways of dealing with things.

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Dealing with things is a complicated process. It has been called a situational response to stress, a trait-like response to stress, and a response to change.¹

Society sees mental illness as something to be ashamed of, and most people in society notice right away that the mentally ill person's behaviour is different from what is expected. In this stage, families play a big role in taking care of mentally ill people, even though family members are less likely to see the person's behaviour as a sign of mental illness. The main idea behind caregiving is to accept the patient, encourage and support the patient, and help the patient with their daily tasks.

Caregiver is a person who is in charge of meeting the physical and mental needs of a patient who depends on them. Patients with mental illness often need help or supervision with their daily tasks, which puts a lot of stress on their caregivers and puts them at a high risk for mental and physical health problems. When a person is diagnosed with a mental illness, their caretakers often deny it at first, which can lead to anger. They look for a lot of ways to deal with and adjust to the situation. In the early 1960s, Grad and Sainsbury were the first to notice how hard it was for caregivers of mentally ill people who lived at home.

One of the biggest health concerns is how to deal with stress, which can have different effects on different people. Stress is mostly a way of getting people to do things because it requires them to adapt (cope) to a demand or set of demands. Stress has an effect on how people deal with it.

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that a person sees as a threat to his or her resources or ways of dealing with things. Dealing with things is a complicated process. It has been called a situational response to stress, a trait-like response to stress, and a response to change.

Aim: this study was aimed to identify the level of stress among caregivers of mentally ill patient

2. Methods

- *Study design:* descriptive survey design was used in to carry out study.
- *Study setting:* tertiary care hospitals from Karad Taluka of Maharashtra state.
- *Sampling method:* non-probability convenient sampling method was used to collect the data.
- *Sample size:* sample consists of 100 caregivers of mentally ill Patients
- *Study population:* caregivers of mentally ill Patients
- *Inclusion criteria:*
Caregivers who are:
 - Spending maximum time with mentally ill patients
 - Available at the time of data collection
- *Exclusion criteria:*
Caregivers who are:
 - Not understanding Marathi language
 - Not willing to participate
- *Tool:*
 1. Demographic Data of caregivers of mentally ill patients comprises of age, gender, education, relation with patient, & occupation.
 2. For assessment of stress, structured four-point rating scale, consists of 22 questions was used
- *Method of data collection:*

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after obtaining the required permission data was collected by using non-probability convenient sampling technique. Participants who were meeting inclusion criteria were enrolled in study, purpose of study was explained to every participant. Written consent was obtained, and data was collected.

– *Statistical analysis:*

The obtained data was analyzed in the terms of the objective of the study using descriptive and inferential statistics

– *Ethical consideration:* ethical clearance is obtained from KIMS deemed to be University, Karad.

3. Results

Table No. 1: sociodemographic data of caregivers of mentally ill patients. n=100

Sr. No.	Socio Demographic Variables		Frequency	Percentage
1	Age	20-30 years	29	29
		31-40 years	39	39
		41-50 years	20	20
		51-60 years	12	12
2	Gender	Male	40	40
		Female	60	60
3	Education	Primary	21	21
		Secondary	22	22
		Higher secondary	30	30
		Graduate	27	27
4	Relation with patient	Father	18	18
		Mother	39	39
		Sibling	21	21
		Spouse	22	22
5	Occupation	Housemaker	22	22
		Daily wages	5	5
		Job	54	54
		Business	19	19

In Table No. 1 shows that 39% of caregivers are between the ages of 31 and 40, 29% are between 20 and 30, and only 20% are between the ages of 51 and 60. There are more women caregivers (60%) than men (40%) who do this work. Based on their level of education, 30% were high

school graduates, 27% were college graduates, 22% were secondary caregivers, and 21% were primary caregivers. Most of the caring for patients was done by mothers (39%), followed by spouses (22%) and siblings (21%). The father did the least amount of caring (18%). 54% of people

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have jobs, 22% are housewives, and 19% and 5%, respectively, are in business or on daily wadges.

Table No. 2 Stress level of caregivers of mentally ill patients. n=100

Sr. No.	Level of stress	Frequency	Percentage %
1	No Stress	00	00
2	Mild Stress	27	27
3	Moderate stress	73	73
4	Severe Stress	00	00
	Total	100	100

Table 2 73% of caregivers have a moderate level of stress, while 27% have a mild level of stress. No one said they didn't have stress, and none of them had a very high level of stress. However, many participants

said they were on the edge of moderate stress, which means there's a chance they could get very stressed, which could hurt them.

4. Discussion

In the current study, the majority of caregivers (73%) are experiencing moderate levels of stress, which is a high number considering that only 27% of caregivers are experiencing mild levels of stress, which can be managed; however, if we consider the entire population, 73% of the population is at risk of getting severe stress, which can lead to psychological disturbances. Again, it's possible that the question of who will care for patients with mental illness will come up.

According to the findings of a study that was carried out in 2019 by Kuchhal AK et al., 42.31 percent of caregivers experienced severe stress despite having a low educational status. The level of stress that was reported by spouses was moderate, while the level of stress that was reported by siblings was the highest. This

demonstrated that stress is affecting caregivers in a moderate to severe manner, depending on their level of education and the relationship they have with their patients⁴.

A study that was conducted in 2021 by Thomas KS et al found that mothers who had attention deficit hyperkinetic disorder (ADHD) or pervasive developmental disorder (PDD) scored the highest possible points on the perceived stress scale for questions pertaining to feeling stressed and nervous, being unable to cope, feeling irritable and angered, and having difficulties piling up to the point where they were unable to overcome it. Therefore, this demonstrates that mothers experience a high level of stress because they are the ones responsible for looking after their children's mental health⁵.

Another study was conducted in 2021 by Rane MN et al. The findings of this study

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show that the area of role performance had the highest stress score, with a modified mean of 2.15. The study also found that 75% of caregivers experience moderate levels of stress, while 25% experience severe levels of stress⁶. Therefore, caregivers might experience difficulties while providing care to patients who have mental disorders. These study results are comparable to the findings of our study in that the majority of participants exhibited moderate levels of stress. This demonstrates that a significant number of people are coping with a moderate level of stress, and if we are unable to assist them, there may be consequences as a result.

5. Conclusion:

The caretakers of mentally ill patients have a level of stress that ranges from mild to moderate; therefore, steps should be taken to alleviate the stress experienced by caregivers.

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