

A STUDY ON CAREGIVER STRESS AND SOCIAL SUPPORT PERCEIVED AMONG INFORMAL CAREGIVERS OF ELDERLY PEOPLE

ABSTRACT

INTRODUCTION:

Demographic trends have shown an increase in geriatric population. Growing geriatric population with a reciprocal decrease in availability of family care givers has laid down excess of stressors on caregivers. the study is aimed at identifying factors influencing caregiver stress.

OBJECTIVE:

1. To estimate the level of caregiver stress as perceived by informal caregivers of elderly people.
2. To identify and analyse the factors influencing caregiver stress.
3. To explore the influence of perceived social support on caregiver stress.

METHODOLOGY:

A cross sectional study was conducted in Padiyanallur area among 180 caregivers from April 2017 to December2017. Multistage sampling was done. Study tool- 1. Pre-tested validated, semi-structured questionnaire 2. Caregiver Stress Scale (CSS) and 3.Multidimensional Scale for Perceived Social Support (MSPSS). Data were analysed using SPSS version 16.

RESULTS:

The prevalence of caregiver stress, P = **43.9% (36.6% – 51.2% CI)**

Almost half (48%) of the female caregivers were highly stressed (P=0.037). Increase in age of both caregiver and care recipient was correlated with increase in stress (p<0.007 and p<0.028 respectively). Spousal caregivers were highly stressed than other relatives (59.3%), (p=0.007). Caregivers with co – morbid conditions were

experiencing high level of stress (60.2%), ($p < 0.001$). Caregivers lacking social support were highly stressed (77%), ($p < 0.001$).

CONCLUSION:

Most of female caregivers were dependent on earning family members. In the absence of support from family they were more likely to be stressed. In the event of getting older along with emergence of co-morbid conditions, caregiving task might have developed stress within spousal caregivers. Unless the family caregivers were able to extract social support from their families, friends and neighbours, most of them would remain highly stressed.

KEY WORDS: Elderly people, Caregiver stress, Perceived social support.