

Caregiver's burden in patients with psychotic disorder family members

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Introduction

The role of the family as caregivers of patients diagnosed with psychotic disorder is an important factor to consider in the global approach to the disease. According to the general theory of stress, caregivers' of patients with psychiatric disorder face with multiple stressors and their response to them can be influenced by the emotional impact of these factors, their family support and their coping strategies. The Zarit Caregiver Burden Interview, translated and validated into Spanish, was designed to measure feelings of burden experienced by the caregivers of elderly people with dementia. This scale has been used in patients diagnosed with psychotic disorders.

Objective

To evaluate the subjective burden of caregivers of patients with psychotic disorder visited in an outpatient mental health center, located in a poor neighborhood of Barcelona.

Method

Cross-sectional study. The sample was made up from patients with psychotic disorders and currently attending our center. Sociodemographic and clinical data were described. Caregiver burden was assessed using the seven-item short version of the Zarit Burden Interview. Each question is scored on a 5 point Likert. Total scores range from 7 (low burden) to 35 (high burden). We considered < 16 punctuation as "no burden" and >17 punctuation as "intense burden". The results were analyzed using the SPSS statistical package.

Results

A total of 32 patients were included in the study, with mean age 39.7 years and 81.3% were male. They were diagnosed with schizophrenia (68.8%), schizoaffective disorder (18.8%), psychotic disorder not otherwise specified (9.4%) and delusional disorder (3.1%). Patients received a score of 4.19 in the clinical global impression scale. Caregivers were parents (71.9%), partner (12.5%), siblings (12.5%) and son/daughter (3.1%). Most of them (81.3%) live with the patient. The average score in the short version of the Zarit Burden Interview is 19.91. The question wich gets the highest average score (3.56) is "Overall, how burdened do you feel in caring for your relative?", although the question "Do you fell stressed between caring for your relative and trying to meet other responsibilities for your family or work?" gets le lowest average score.

Figure 1. Caregivers of patients diagnosed with psychotic disorder

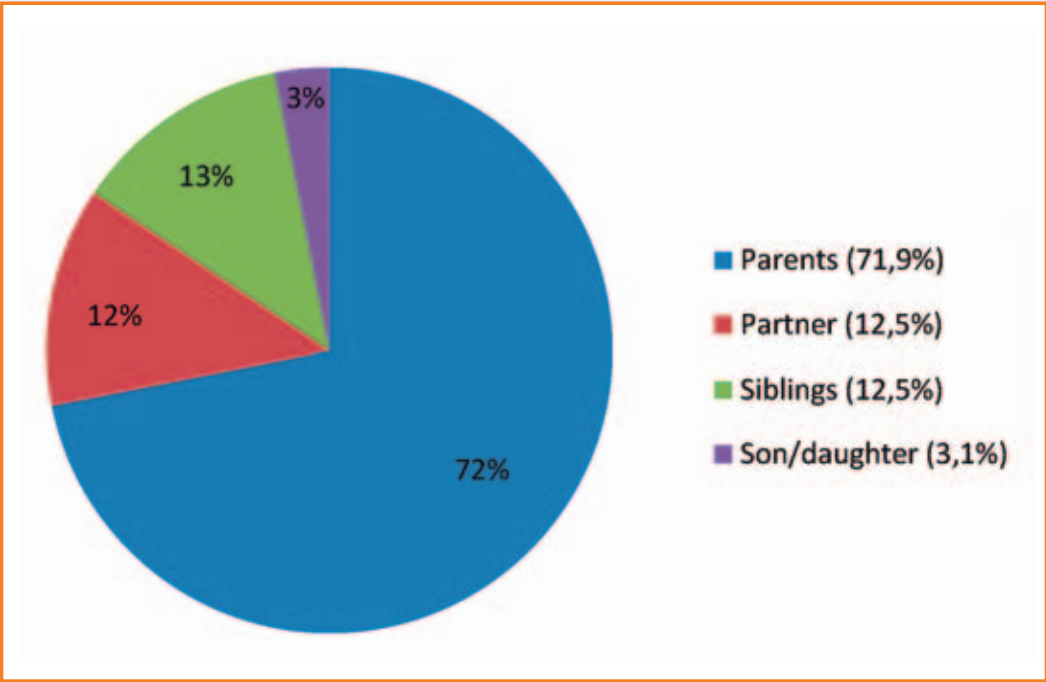


Table 1. Zarit caregiver burden scale

	Mean
1. Do you feel that because of the time you spend with your relative that you don't have enough time for yourself?	3.03
2. Do you feel setressed between caring for your relative and trying to meet other responsibilities for your family or work?	3.06
3. Do you feel that your relative currently affects your relationships with other familiy members or friends in a negative way?	1.81
4. Do you feel strained when are around your relative?	3.09
5. Do you feel your health has suffered because of your involvement with your relative?	2.34
6. Do you feel you have lost control of your life since your relative's illness?	3.00
7. Overall, how burdened do you feel in caring for your relative?	3.56
Total score	19.91

Conclusions

Family members of our sample of patients with psychotic disorder have intense burden. In the outpatient mental health center the multidisciplinary and integrated approach to patients with psychotic disorder should also include prevention and detection of caregiver burden because it may be associated with new psychopathology in caregivers and could affect negatively the caregiver / patient relationship.

Bibliography

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