



SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF CAREGIVERS OF SCHIZOPHRENIC PATIENTS-STUDY FROM NORTH INDIA

Rameshwar S Manhas	Senior Resident , Department of Psychiatry, Government Medical College, Jammu, J&K, India.
Rukhsana Akhter	MA in Psychology, Intern, Department of Psychiatry, Government Medical College, Jammu, J&K, India.
Angli Manhas*	Senior Resident, Department of Ophthalmology, Government Medical College Jammu, J&K, India. *Corresponding Author
Gaurav S Manhas	Senior Resident, Department of Ophthalmology, Government Medical College Jammu, J&K, India.
Jagdish R Thappa	Prof & HOD , Department of Psychiatry, Government Medical College, Jammu, J&K, India.

ABSTRACT

Background: Schizophrenia is a debilitating & serious psychiatric disorder which not only affects the life of patients but also affects the life of their family members and caregivers.

Aims: To find the sociodemographic profile of the caregivers of schizophrenic patients.

Materials & Methods: The present observational study involved 150 caregivers of patients suffering from schizophrenia. Various parameters like age, sex, residence, education, occupation, religion, type of family and relation with patient etc were studied.

Results: The mean age of caregivers in present study was 46.02 (\pm 14.21) years with majority i.e. 46.7% were in the age group of \geq 46 years. Females outnumbered males as caregivers of schizophrenia patient. Total of 63.3% caregivers were from rural background, 82.6% were married, 51.3% were from joint families, 56.7% were unemployed & 45.4% were illiterate. Maximum number of caregivers i.e. 44% were parents.

Conclusion: From present study, it has been concluded that majority of the caregivers of the schizophrenia patients were females, illiterate, unemployed, living in joint families and were parents. So it is suggest that researchers and mental health professionals should attend to the special needs of these group of caregivers for better outcome of disease.

KEYWORDS : Caregivers, Schizophrenia, Sociodemographic profile.

INTRODUCTION:

Schizophrenia is a debilitating and serious psychiatric disorder which not only affects the life of patients but also affects the life of their family members. As schizophrenia is a chronic disorder it leads to functional decline to the extent of loss of social functioning, impairs communication patterns in the family most often causes occupational difficulties & puts schizophrenic patients as a burden on their family members.¹ Family members may need to devote more time to caring for their patient & often react to the strains that patient care introduces into their daily lives.²

Caregiver is someone who gives unpaid care to a relative or friend who is dependent because of age, physical or other disability & who would if not cared for, require support from the state or other means.³ Caregiver not only provide practical help & personal care such as bathing, eating but also give emotional support to their relative with a mental disorder.⁴ The caregiver may provide support to the patient in many ways like monitoring of medications, making & going to doctor appointments, participating in therapy sessions, providing financial support, providing transportation, developing & managing a routine in the home, communicating with healthcare professionals, observing symptoms to identify episodes or worsening issues, providing or assisting with good health habits, like eating well & exercising etc.² However most of the times the caregiver has insufficient knowledge, poor skills to provide care, poor mental health facilities & limited social support which puts them under immense psychological stress.⁴ The complexity of caregiving is influenced by the quantity of required tasks, many of which are not predictable. These tasks may require insights & abilities that caregivers do not possess adding to caregiver's anxiety & frustration.²

MATERIAL AND METHOD:

The present observational study was conducted on caregivers of patients suffering from schizophrenia attending the outpatient department of Psychiatry, Government Medical College, Jammu, Jammu and Kashmir, India, after due clearance from Institutional Ethics Committee. The informed consent from all the caregivers of schizophrenia patients was undertaken before inclusion in the current study. A total number of 150 caregivers of schizophrenia patients were selected from outpatient department & various sociodemographic characters like age, sex, address, occupation, religion, education, type of family, relation with patient etc were studied.

Statistical Analysis:

Analysis of data was done using statistical software MS Excel / SPSS version 17.0 for windows. Data presented as percentage (%) as discussed appropriate for quantitative and qualitative variables.

OBSERVATION & RESULTS:

Table no. 1 shows that 46.7% caregivers were in the age group of \geq 46 years followed by 26.7% in 36-45 years. Females i.e. 52.7% outnumbered males as caregivers. Maximum number of caregivers i.e. 63.3% were from rural background. Majority i.e. 88% caregivers were Hindus. Moreover 82.6% of caregivers were married followed by 8.6% of caregivers which were unmarried.

Out of 150 caregivers, 51.3% were from joint families whereas 48.7% were from nuclear families, 56.7% were unemployed and 47.3% were employed. As per educational status 45.4% were illiterate, 10% had primary education, 18% were 8th pass, 24.6% were 12th pass and only 2% were graduates. Majority of

caregivers i.e. 40% were parents followed by spouses which forms 34.7% of the group

DISCUSSION:

In our study the maximum number of caregivers were in the age group of above 46 years i.e. 46.7 % followed by 36-45 years i.e. 26.7%. The caregiving is a tough, consistent and continuous process for years,⁵ hence most of the caregivers of schizophrenic patients are in their 5th decade of their life.³ Our finding is in accordance with Sintayehu M et al who found that maximum number of caregivers of schizophrenic patients i.e. 45.1% were above the age of 45 years.⁶ The mean age of caregivers in our study was 46.02 (\pm 14.21) years. Singh M et al and Shah STH et al had also found that the mean age of caregivers of schizophrenia patients was 48.9 (\pm 13.50)⁷ and 45.44 (\pm 14.25)⁵ years respectively.

In our study maximum number of caregivers were female i.e. 52.7% whereas 47.3% were males. In Asian countries like India, Japan, Malaysia, Pakistan etc the primary role of caring for dependent family members has been assigned to women. Cultural issues in these countries dictates that the primary caregiver for ill or dependent relatives are usually the wife, adult daughter, or daughter in law, especially the first daughter in law.¹ Moreover the women are responsible for the emotional care of family members (especially their childrens) and hence it is more acceptable for the women's to take up the role of caregiver.⁶ Geetha S and Sudhakaram MV had also found the most common caretakers of schizophrenic patients were females 83.3% as compared to males 16.7%.⁸ Similar observations were made by Mahmoud S in his study on 120 caretakers of schizophrenic patients where 62.7% were females whereas 37.3% were males.⁹ Derajew et al had also found the most common caretakers of schizophrenic patients were females 56.3% as compared to males 43.7%.¹⁰ Similar results were also found in other studies.^{11,12,13}

The majority of the caregivers in our study were from rural background (63.3%) as compared to the urban dwellings (36.7%). The overall rural and urban divide of the population in our country where still the majority of the population resides in rural areas.¹⁴ This can also be explained on the basis of fact that this hospital is the only major hospital in the whole of the Jammu division so it gets referrals from all the areas of Jammu division as well as nearby areas like Pathankot. The finding is in accordance with Sintayehu M et al who found that maximum number of caretakers i.e. 74.6% were from rural background.⁵ Similarly Shihabuddeen had also found that 60.9% of caretakers lives in rural areas.¹⁵

The majority of the caregivers in our study i.e. 132 (88%) were Hindus followed by 14 (9.3%) Muslims and 4 (2.7%) who belong to other religion. The reason could be that in India majority of peoples i.e. 79.8% were Hindus, 14.23% were Muslims and rest belongs to other religion.¹⁴ Our finding is in agreement with Jagannathan A et al who found that 90 % caretakers were Hindus.¹¹ However Sintayehu M et al and Derajew H et al in their respective studies had found Christians being the majority caretakers of schizophrenia patients.^{6,10} The reason for this disparity can be defined by the fact that our study and the study done by Jagannathan A et al were done in India which is a Hindu majority country¹⁴ whereas Sintayehu M et al and Derajew H et al had done their studies in Christian dominant countries.

In our study most of the caregivers 124 i.e. 82.6% were married followed by unmarried 12 i.e. 8.6% followed by widowed 11 (7.4%) and 2 (1.4%) who were divorced. The reason might be that maximum of our studied caregivers i.e. 73.45% were above the age of 25 years and most peoples in this part of world were married by the age of 30 years. The finding is in agreement with Shah STH et al who found that 68% of

caretakers of schizophrenic patients were married.⁵ Moreover Derajew H et al had also found that maximum number of caretakers i.e. 63% were married.¹⁰

In our study 77 i.e. 51.3% caregivers are from joint family whereas 73 i.e. 48.7% caregivers are from nuclear family. Our finding is in accordance with Vijayalakshmi K and Ponnuchamy L et al who found that the number of caretakers of schizophrenia patients belonging to joint families exceeds than those belonging to nuclear families.^{4,16} However other studies like Jagannathan A et al and Raj et al had found which had found that caretakers from nuclear families outnumbered than those from joint families.^{11,17} One possible explanation for this difference could be that in our study the majority of the caretakers are from rural background and as per Niranjann S et al the most common type of family system in rural India is joint family.¹⁸

In our study maximum number of caregivers i.e. 45.4 % were illiterate. This is in contrast to other studies which had had shown lower rates of illiterate caretakers.^{3,6,8,11} The reason for this could be that in our study majority of caregivers were from rural background and literacy rates are lower in rural areas as compared to urban areas.¹⁴ However our finding is in accordance with Shah STH et al who found that 56% caregivers were uneducated.⁵

In our study majority of caregivers i.e. 85 (56.7%) were unemployed whereas 65 (43.3%) were employed. Our finding is in accordance with Shah STH et al and Amagai M et al who found that 64% and 58.3% of caregivers of schizophrenia patients were unemployed respectively.^{5,18} Moreover Bharti J had also found that 55.6% caregivers of schizophrenia patients were unemployed.²⁰

In our study maximum number of caregivers i.e. 66 (44%) were parents followed by spouses i.e. 52 (34.7%). Our finding is in accordance with Vijayalakshmi K who found that 55.9% and 27% of caretakers of schizophrenia patients were parents and spouses respectively.⁴ Similarly Raj et al had also found that majority of caretakers of schizophrenia patients i.e. 50.1 % were parents.¹⁷ Moreover Mahmoud S and Uddin et al in their respective studies had found that majority of caretakers were parents.^{9,3} Similar results to our study were also found by Derjow H et al, Jagannathan A et al and Creado DA et al respectively.^{10,11,13} However Geetha S and Sudhakaram MV had found that spouse outnumbered parents as caretakers of schizophrenia patients.⁸ The possible reason for this could be that Geetha S et al had done their studies on caretakers of schizophrenia patients who were admitted in psychiatric wards whereas we had conducted our study on caregivers of schizophrenic patients attending OPD (outpatient department) for consultation. Moreover sample size in our study (150) is much more than the sample size of the study conducted by Geetha S et al which constitutes only 30 caretakers.

CONCLUSION:

From present study, it has been concluded that majority of the caregivers of the schizophrenia patients were females from rural background, illiterate, unemployed, living in joint families. It suggest that researchers and mental health professionals should attend to the special needs of these group of caregivers for better outcome of disease.

Acknowledgement:

Thanks from the core of my heart GOD and my parents for their blessings.

DECLARATION:

Funding: No funding sources

Conflict of interest: None declared

Table no. 1 shows sociodemographic profile of caregivers of schizophrenic patients

	Number of caregivers	Percentage (%)
Age (in years)		
≤25	12	8
26-35	28	18.6
26-45	40	26.7
≥46	70	46.7
Sex		
Males	71	47.3
Females	79	52.7
Residence		
Rural	95	63.3
Urban	55	36.7
Religion		
Hindu	132	88
Muslims	14	9.3
Others	4	2.7
Marital status		
Married	124	82.6
Unmarried	13	8.6
Divorced	2	1.4
Widowed	11	7.4
Type of family		
Joint	77	51.3
Nuclear	73	48.7
Education		
Illiterate	68	45.4
Primary	15	10
Middle	27	18
Secondary	37	24.6
Graduation and above	3	2
Occupation		
Employed	65	43.3
Unemployed	85	56.7
Relation		
Parents	66	44
Spouses	52	34.7
Siblings	19	12.7
Others	13	8.6

REFERENCES:

- Talwar P and Matheiken ST. Caregivers in schizophrenia: A cross Cultural Perspective. *Indian J Psychol Med.* 2010; 32(1): 29-33.
- Given BA, Given CW, Kozachik S. Family support in advanced cancer. *CA Cancer J Clin* 2001;51:213-231.
- Uddin MMJ, Alam MT, Ahmed HU et al. Psychiatric Morbidity among Caregivers of Schizophrenia Patients – A Study in Tertiary Care Psychiatric Hospital in Dhaka. *J Curr Adv Med Res.* 2015;(1):12-17.
- Vijayalakshmi K. Depression and Associated Factors among Caregivers of Patients with Severe Mental Illness. *The International Journal of Indian Psychology.* 2016:36-46.
- Shah STH, Sultan SM, Faisal M, Irfan M. Psychological distress among caregivers of patients with schizophrenia. *J Ayub Med Coll Abbottabad.* 2013;25(3-4):27-30.
- Sintayehu M, Mulat H, Yohannis Z, Adera T, Fekade F. Prevalence of mental distress and associated factors among caregivers of patients with severe mental illness in the outpatient unit of Amanuel Hospital, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 2013: Cross-sectional study. *Journal of Molecular Psychiatry* 2015;3:9:1-10.
- Singh M, Desousa A. Factors affecting depression in caregivers of patients with schizophrenia. *Journal of mental health and human behavior* 2011;16(2):87-94.
- Geetha S and Sudhakaran MV. Family Burden and Coping among Caregivers of Schizophrenia. *The International Journal of Indian Psychology* 2017, 4(4):16-31.
- Mahmoud S. Association between burden of care and resilience among family caregivers living with schizophrenic patients. *IOSR Journal of Nursing and Health Science* 2011;7(2):42-55.
- Derajew H, Tolessa D, Feyissa GT, Addisu F, Soboka M. Prevalence of depression and its associated factors among primary caregivers of patients with severe mental illness in southwest, Ethiopia. *BMC Psychiatry* 2017;17(88):1-8.
- Jagannathan A, Thirthalli J, Hamza A, Hariprasad VR, Nagendra HR & Gangadhar BN. A qualitative study on the needs of caregivers of inpatients with schizophrenia in India. *International Journal of Social Psychiatry* 2011;57(2):180-194.
- Ong HC, Ibrahim N and Wahab S. Psychological distress, perceived stigma, and coping among caregivers of patients with schizophrenia. *Psychol Res Behav Manag.* 2016; 9: 211-218.
- Creado DA, Parkar SR, Kamath RM. A comparison of the level of functioning in chronic schizophrenia with coping and burden in caregivers. *Indian J Psychiatry.* 2006; 48(1):27-33.
- Government of India, Ministry of Home Affairs, The Census 2011 online results/paper2/data files/I&K/Population and decadal growth.
- Shihabuddeen TMI and Gopinath PS. Group meetings of caretakers of patients with schizophrenia and bipolar mood disorders. *Indian J Psychiatry* 2005; 47(3): 153-156.
- Ponnuchamy L and Rao MC. Psychiatric social work intervention for social rejection of persons with schizophrenia in rural Areas – an intervention study. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention* 2016;5(3):20-30.
- Raj EA, Shiri S, Jangam KV. Subjective burden, psychological distress, and perceived social support among caregivers of persons with schizophrenia. *Indian Journal of Social Psychiatry.* 2016;32 (1):42-49.
- Niranjann S, Sureender S, Rao GR. Family Structure in India - Evidence from NFHS. *Demography India* 1998;27(2):287-300.
- Amagai M, Takahashi M, Amagai F. Qualitative study of resilience of family caregivers for patients with Schizophrenia in Japan. *Mental Health in Family Medicine* 2016; 12: 307-312.
- Bharti J. Expressed Emotion among Caregivers of Person with Schizophrenia and Obsessive Compulsive Disorder: A Comparative Study. *The International Journal of Indian Psychology* 2015, 189-200.