



**ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER**

**Social Work**

**PSYCHOLOGICAL PROBLEMS OF FAMILY CAREGIVERS OF PATIENTS WITH SCHIZOPHRENIA**

**KEY WORDS:** Mental health, Schizophrenia, Family caregivers, Emotional dilemma

**Sejal Macwan\***

PhD Scholar, Anand Institute of Social Work, Anand, Affiliated to Sardar Patel University, VV Nagar, Gujarat \*Corresponding Author

**Dr. Ninad Jhala**

Principal & Associate Professor, Anand Institute of Social Work, Anand, Affiliated to Sardar Patel University, VV Nagar, Gujarat

**ABSTRACT**

Approximately 24 million people worldwide experiencing schizophrenia (The World Health Report, 2001). Several people with mental disorder have to rely on support of family and friends to help them in their day-to-day happenings. In that era, caregivers are at risk for physical and mental health dilemma. Caring for a person with any mental illness often creates physical, emotional dilemma among the family caregivers more than they think. That is why it is also essential to rationalize that issue too. Family care givers of patients with any mental illness have different perspectives and coping strategies about the situation that may lead to feeling of sadness, loneliness, helplessness, hopeless at a variance among the care givers.

**OBJECTIVES:**

- To study levels of psychological problems faced by the family caregivers of patients with schizophrenia.
- To study association between demographic variables and levels of psychological problems of family caregivers with schizophrenia.

**METHOD:** A descriptive study was carried out to examine the psychological problems faced by family caregivers of patients with schizophrenia. 200 family caregivers were selected by applying stratified systematic sampling method from the government hospitals of mental health of Gujarat state with a criterion of minimum facility of 100 beds. A self-structured interview schedule was designed for study purpose by referring the Burden Assessment Tool of Thara et.al (1998) and Zarit Burden Interview. **RESULT:** Majority of the respondents (81%) feel anxious, depressed and frustrated due to caregiving responsibility. Majority of the respondents (52.5%) believed that care giving responsibility is mentally tiring for the family caregivers. Majority of the respondents (40.5%) agree with the statement that their contacts with family & friends have lessened due to the illness of care receiver.

**INTRODUCTION:**

Family caregivers of patients with mental disorders display prominent role in the caring patients with any psychotic disorders and averting their readmission. These caregivers confront diverse challenges in different cultures.

Studies in same regard have shown that the standing of family caregivers of patients with any mental illnesses have been mistreated in many countries. Though some of the requests and encounters for caregivers and family members of patients may be mutual with the patients, they have sole needs with many uncertainties.<sup>2</sup>

At the other side, many doctors and health professional, particularly nurses treating the psychotics, often center their maintenance more on the patient and overlook the family and main caregivers of the patient. These medical and paramedical professionals exclude them from the disease, treatment, and decision-making procedures and do not think through their needs; henceforth, families do not have a chance to direct their concerns and needs and are at a risk of serious problems.<sup>3</sup>

Caregivers of patients diagnosed with schizophrenia encounter moderate to severe caregiver burden and are at threat for developing mental syndromes.<sup>4</sup>

Schizophrenia is a mental disorder characterized by delusions, hallucinations, disorganized speech and behaviour (Tandon, et al. 2013). The disease affects mainly persons 15-35 years, and symptoms may cause social or occupational dysfunction. The global prevalence of schizophrenia is estimated at 1.1% of the population over the age of 18 years (WHO 2011).

Caring for relatives with schizophrenia may result in a significant burden to caregivers (Chan 2011). It is estimated that as high as 90% of caregivers experience moderate

to severe burden, and among caregivers of patients diagnosed with schizophrenia are a potential high risk group for mental disorders (Magliano et al. 2005, Koujalgi & Patil 2013, Lasebikan & Ayinde 2013).<sup>5</sup>

**MATERIALS & METHODS:**

The present study was conducted in the Government hospitals of Mental Health of Ahmedabad & Vadodara of Gujarat State. The data was collected during 2017. The objectives of the study were to study the psychological problems of the family care givers of the patients with schizophrenia and to study association between demographic variables and levels of psychological problems of family caregivers with schizophrenia. Stratified Systematic Sampling method was used for data collection. Total 200 family caregivers of patients with schizophrenia constituted the sample size. Data was collected in a predesigned structured Proforma. Data was entered & analyzed in Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Test of significance (Chi square test) was used where ever necessary. A probability value of <0.05 was taken as statistically significant.

**REVIEW OF LITERATURE:**

Deshpande, SS., Dewani, S. Sirkhot, SN. and Veerkar, D. (2018) conducted a research titled Insights into Psychosocial Problems of Primary Caretakers of Patients with Schizophrenia in India with a view to explore various stresses and social problems faced by caretakers of the patients with schizophrenia. 30 family caregivers of patients with schizophrenia were interviewed regarding their physical, psychological and social problems from a tertiary hospital of the city by using a semi structured interview schedule. The findings of their study revealed that majority of the respondents were found as parents. Distress among the parent was reported due to blaming of relatives for not properly upbringing their offspring. Moreover, the psychological problems like stigma, anger, anxiety were commonly reported by the family caregivers.<sup>6</sup>

Ghafar, S.A., Fathalla H.E. and Nabi, A.A. (2018) carried out a research on Resilience, burden, and quality of life in Egyptian family caregivers of patients with schizophrenia with an objective to measure the levels of resilience, burden, and quality of life among the family caregivers of patients with schizophrenia and their relationships. The study was conducted at the psychiatric Out Patient Department clinic of mental health hospital in Tanta city. 109 family caregivers of patients with schizophrenia were interviewed in a descriptive study wherein the Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale, Burden of Care Inventory, and the WHO Quality of Life Scale were used to measure the level of burden among the respondents. The finding of the study reveals that a significant positive correlation between resilience level and quality of life was noticed. The family caregivers have moderate level of resilience; roughly two-thirds of them have poor overall quality of life and undergoing moderate to severe burden.<sup>7</sup>

**RESULT & DISCUSSIONS:**

**Table 1: Psychological Problems of family caregivers of patients with schizophrenia**

| PSYCHOLOGICAL PARAMETERS (N=200)   | SA   | A    | N    | D    | SD  | TOTAL (%) |
|--|------|------|------|------|-----|-----------|
| The care giver feels anxious and depressed because of care receiver (patient with schizophrenia) | 47   | 51   | 01   | 01   | -   | 100       |
| Feels there is no solution to their problems   | 34   | 57   | 05   | 04   | -   |           |
| Disturbed by the unpredicted behaviour of the care receiver                                      | 25.5 | 58.5 | 1.5  | 14.5 | -   |           |
| Feels lonely and isolated since the illness of care receiver                                     | 22.5 | 33   | -    | 35.5 | 09  |           |
| Feels frustrated due to slow improvement in care receiver  | 30.5 | 51   | 0.5  | 16.5 | 1.5 |           |
| Gets angry due to care receiver's behaviour when relatives are around                            | 10.5 | 29.5 | 04   | 50.5 | 5.5 |           |
| Never feel tired and worn out due to caregiving responsibilities                                 | 2.5  | 9.5  | 01   | 50   | 37  |           |
| Feels if I would run away from the entire situation  | 22.5 | 31   | 14.5 | 31.5 | 0.5 |           |
| Care giving responsibility is mentally tiring  | 25.5 | 52.5 | 0.5  | 21.5 | -   |           |
| Easily get angry on the care receiver  | 17   | 16   | 3.5  | 59.5 | 04  |           |

\* SA: Strongly Agree, A: Agree, N: Neutral, D: Disagree, SD: Strongly Disagree

The table 1 reflects the psychological problems faced by the family caregivers of patients with schizophrenia in caring them in family. Major number of respondents agrees that they do become anxious and stressed (51%), get disturbs with the unpredicted behaviour of the care receivers i.e. patients with schizophrenia (58.5%) and feel that there is no solution to their problems (57%). They are also being frustrated for the slow improvement in the patient (51%).

**Table 2: Association between Demographic profile & levels of psychological problems of family caregivers:**

| Particulars (N=200) | Frequency | Percentage | Levels of Psychological Problems |          |     | p Value |
|---------------------|-----------|------------|----------------------------------|----------|-----|---------|
|                     |           |            | High                             | Moderate | Low |         |
| <b>Gender</b>       |           |            |                                  |          |     |         |
| <b>Education</b>    |           |            |                                  |          |     |         |

|                               |     |      |    |    |    |      |
|-------------------------------|-----|------|----|----|----|------|
| Male                          | 97  | 48.5 | 50 | 46 | 01 | .850 |
| Female                        | 103 | 51.5 | 49 | 53 | 01 |      |
| Illiterate                    | 48  | 24   | 30 | 18 | -  | .050 |
| Primary Education             | 44  | 22   | 27 | 17 | -  |      |
| Up to Higher Secondary        | 54  | 27   | 21 | 33 | -  |      |
| Graduate                      | 43  | 21.5 | 16 | 25 | 2  |      |
| Post-Graduate                 | 10  | 5    | 05 | 05 | -  |      |
| Other                         | 01  | 0.5  | -  | 01 | -  |      |
| <b>Source of Livelihood</b>   |     |      |    |    |    |      |
| No source of income           | 07  | 3.5  | 6  | 01 | -  | .000 |
| Income from agriculture       | 18  | 09   | 11 | 07 | -  |      |
| Business                      | 53  | 26.5 | 19 | 34 | -  |      |
| Service                       | 53  | 26.5 | 26 | 27 | -  |      |
| Labour work                   | 59  | 29.5 | 33 | 26 | -  |      |
| (Retired) Pension             | 10  | 05   | 04 | 04 | 2  |      |
| <b>Duration of Caregiving</b> |     |      |    |    |    |      |
| 2 to 4 years                  | 30  | 15   | 14 | 16 | -  | .517 |
| 4.1 to 6 years                | 47  | 23.5 | 21 | 26 | -  |      |
| 6.1 to 8 years                | 44  | 22   | 27 | 16 | 01 |      |
| 8 years & above               | 79  | 39.5 | 37 | 41 | 01 |      |

It can be depicted from the table 2 that there is a statistically significant association between sources of livelihood and the psychological problems faced by family caregivers of patients with schizophrenia. While there is no statistically significant association between the psychological problems faced by family caregivers and other independent variables like gender and education and duration of care giving (years of involvement) of the family caregiver.

**CONCLUSION:**

It can be concluded from the above study the level of psychological problems faced by family caregivers of patients with schizophrenia is high among the family whose source of livelihood is labour work. Statistically significant association is found between the psychological problems faced by family caregivers and education. The family caregivers who are involved in care giving role for more than 8 years have reported moderate level of psychological problems.

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