

ABSTRACT

Family caregiving to a person with mental illness is often associated with a significant objective and subjective burden on other family members and the extent of burden depends on several factors. The present study assessed the level of caregiving burden, coping behaviors and social support among 56 family caregivers of the patients with mental illness admitted in Psychiatry Ward of TUTH. It was an exploratory and descriptive study using purposive sampling method. A semi structured sociodemographic pro-forma; Burden Assessment Schedule (BAS), Brief Cope and Medical Outcome Study Social Support Survey (MOS SSS) were used.

Among 56 caregivers, 50 % were male, 42.9 % belonged to 31-45 years' age group, 75% were married, 23.2 % had education up to intermediate level, 44.6 % were unemployed, 57.1 % were from urban areas and joint families, 53.6 % were from lower middle socioeconomic status family and 51.8 % had the family history of mental illness. Patients' characteristics showed 60.7 % were male, 50 % were in the age group 16-30 years, 46.4 % were unmarried, 32.1 % had education up to secondary level, 71.4 % were unemployed, 42.9 % were cared by parents, 46.4 % had schizophrenia or psychotic disorders, 51.8 % had total duration of illness more than five years, and 41.1 % had first hospitalization. Caregivers reported minimal (17.9 %), moderate (48.2 %), severe (32.1%) and very severe (1.8%) level of caregiving burden. Statistically significant difference was observed on burden according to marital status of caregivers, their relation with patient and level of burden. Family caregiving burden significantly negatively correlated with social support ($r = -.336$, $p < 0.05$) but significantly positively correlated with coping ($r = .427$, $p < 0.01$).

The study indicated that family caregivers experience moderate to severe level of burden. Caregiver's marital status (married) and relation with patient (parents) were significantly associated with the extent of burden. Caregivers with higher burden used more coping behaviors. More availability of different forms of social support associated with lower caregiving burden.