

Review Article

Caregiver Burden: How a Family Caregiver for a Person with Mental Illness Maintains and Improves the Quality of Life

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Abstract: This paper is based on a literature review on caregiver burden, quality of life family caregivers, and how to improve the quality of life of family caregivers for the person with mental illness. Studies have shown that caregivers of people with mental illness experience an enormous burden while providing care for their relatives with mental illness. This burden often leads to psychological distress and a high prevalence of psychological morbidity among family caregivers. Various factors influence the burden experienced by caregivers of individuals with mental illness. Studies have identified several key factors that contribute to caregiver burden, shedding light on the complex interplay of elements that impact the well-being of caregivers. To maintain and improve the quality of life the prevention and treatment of caregiver burden for persons with mental illness can be addressed through various strategies and interventions.

Keywords: Caregiver, burden, person with mental illness, psychological morbidity.

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INTRODUCTION

The burden on family caregivers of individuals with mental illness has been extensively studied. Studies have shown that caregivers of people with mental illness experience an enormous burden while providing care for their relatives with mental illness (Ayalew *et al.*, 2019). This burden often leads to psychological distress and a high prevalence of psychological morbidity among family caregivers (Udoh *et al.*, 2021). Additionally, the burden experienced by caregivers of schizophrenia patients is considerable (Hajebi *et al.*, 2019). Furthermore, the burden among family caregivers has been found to have a negative effect on their quality of life (Sustrami *et al.*, 2022). It has also been noted that family burden has a greater impact on the quality of life of caregivers (Senthil, 2016). In addition to the burden, the quality of life of family caregivers of individuals with mental illness has been a focus of research. Studies have shown that caregiving burdens can lead to caregivers experiencing a poor quality of life (Wong *et al.*, 2012). Furthermore, differences in burden as well as physical and mental quality of life were found, according to several caregivers' sociodemographic characteristics (Costa *et al.*, 2020). Family psychoeducation has been found to have a positive impact on the perceived quality

of life of caregivers of schizophrenia patients (Verma *et al.*, 2019). Moreover, an intervention program is effective in improving grief symptoms, caregiver burden, resilience, post-traumatic growth, and quality of life of family caregivers (Bravo-Benítez *et al.*, 2021). The relationship between family interaction, family burden, and the quality of life among caregivers of patients with epilepsy has also been explored, with family burden found to have a greater impact on the quality of life (Senthil, 2016). Furthermore, the impact of family burden on key caregivers of dementia and schizophrenia patients was assessed, with the burden found to have a significant impact on the quality of life of key caregivers (Swain *et al.*, 2017). In summary, the burden on family caregivers of individuals with mental illness has been extensively studied, with a focus on its impact on the physical and mental health of caregivers, as well as their quality of life. The findings suggest that interventions and support programs are needed to alleviate the burden and improve the quality of life of family caregivers of individuals with mental illness.

Caregiver Burden for Person with Mental Illness

The burden on family caregivers of individuals with mental illness is a significant and multifaceted issue

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that has been extensively studied. Caregiver burden is characterized by financial constraints, productivity loss, and lost employment, leading to moderate to severe burden Addo et al. (2018). This burden is negatively related to the health-related quality of life, particularly mental health, indicating the profound impact on caregivers' well-being (Chang *et al.*, 2010). The caregiver burden can be quantified into objective, subjective, and demand burdens, encompassing sadness, fear, anger, guilt, loss, stigma, and rejection (Ampalam *et al.*, 2012; Siddiqui & Khalid, 2019). Studies have shown that caregivers of people with mental illness experience enormous burdens while providing care for their relatives (Ayalew *et al.*, 2019). Additionally, approximately 15% of family caregivers experienced a no-to-mild burden, 51.3% experienced a mild-to-moderate burden, and 34.0% experienced a high-or-severe burden, highlighting the prevalence and varying degrees of burden experienced by caregivers (Udoh *et al.*, 2021).

Furthermore, the struggle to face stigma and shouldering the caregiving burden is often marginalized, undervalued, and invisible to medical services, compounding the challenges faced by caregivers (Ebrahim *et al.*, 2020). The burden on caregivers of individuals with severe mental illness is an underestimated health concern, impacting their posttraumatic stress symptoms, quality of life, and stress burden (Rady *et al.*, 2021). Severe mental illness exerts a tremendous burden on both the sufferer and the caregiver, emphasizing the pervasive impact on both parties (Ofovwe & Osasona, 2022). Moreover, the buffering effects of social security benefits for persons with psychiatric disability have been found to impact the quality of life of caregivers, indicating the potential influence of external support systems on caregiver burden (Majhi & Vasava, 2022). The severity of illness and distress in caregivers of patients with schizophrenia has been studied, with internalized stigma and caregiving burden mediating the relationship, shedding light on the complex interplay of factors contributing to caregiver burden (Guan *et al.*, 2020). Hospitalization has also been found to affect caregiver burden associated with severe mental illnesses, further highlighting the multifaceted nature of caregiver burden (Saucedo-Urbe *et al.*, 2022). Additionally, the personality traits and features of caregivers have been shown to increase the risk of caregiver burden and depression, emphasizing the individual differences in coping with caregiver burden (Lautenschlager *et al.*, 2013; Nordtug *et al.*, 2010).

In summary, the burden on family caregivers of individuals with mental illness is a complex and multifaceted issue that encompasses financial, emotional, and psychological challenges. The impact of caregiver burden on caregivers' well-being and quality of life is substantial and requires comprehensive support and interventions to address the diverse needs of caregivers.

Factors Caused Caregiver Burden

Various factors influence the burden experienced by caregivers of individuals with mental illness. Studies have identified several key factors that contribute to caregiver burden, shedding light on the complex interplay of elements that impact the well-being of caregivers. One significant factor contributing to caregiver burden is the economic impact of caregiving. Caregivers often face financial constraints, productivity loss, and employment challenges, which contribute to moderate to severe burdens Addo *et al.*, (2018). Additionally, the impact of mental health and caregiver burden on family caregivers' physical health has been highlighted, with factors such as age, education level, caring hours per day, and emotional, functional, and physical support systems influencing the burden experienced by caregivers (Chang *et al.*, 2010).

The nature of psychiatric illness and the behavior of the psychiatrically ill have been identified as factors that disrupt the relationship between the caregiver and the patient, contributing to the caregiver burden (Ampalam *et al.*, 2012). Moreover, caregiver characteristics, caregiving burdens, and satisfaction with psychiatric services have been found to play roles in the quality of life of caregivers with relatives suffering from mental illness (Wong *et al.*, 2012). The magnitude of burden among caregivers has been found to depend on several factors, including the age and sex of the caregivers, the pre-morbid relationship between the patient and caregivers, the nature of the patient's illness, the coping strategies of the caregivers, and cultural and ethnic variables (Ayalew *et al.*, 2019). Furthermore, social, and emotional dysfunction, psychological distress, and cognitive dysfunction have been identified as components of psychological health that contribute to caregiver burden (Udoh *et al.*, 2021).

Stigma and the severity of mental illness have also been recognized as significant factors contributing to caregiver burden. Young patients with a more severe form of mental illness and/or a lack of adequate vocational and independent living skills have been associated with an increased burden on their caregivers (Ebrahim *et al.*, 2020). Additionally, internalized stigma and caregiving burden have been found to mediate the relationship between the severity of illness and distress among family caregivers of persons living with schizophrenia (Guan *et al.*, 2020). Other factors such as illness perception, expressed emotion, coping skills, and the duration of caregiving have also been identified as contributors to caregiver burden (Elsherif *et al.*, 2020; Muralitharan & Devi, 2016; Bauer *et al.*, 2012). Effective coping behaviors used to address challenges presented by mental illness have been found to moderate the effect of caregiving burden on well-being outcomes, indicating the potential role of coping strategies in mitigating caregiver burden (Amir Ella, 2015). In summary, caregiver burden in the context of mental illness is influenced by a multitude of factors, including

economic, social, emotional, and illness-related elements. Understanding these factors is crucial for developing targeted interventions and support systems to alleviate the burden on family caregivers of individuals with mental illness.

Impact of Caregiver Burden for Persons with Mental Illness

The impact of caregiver burden on persons with mental illness is a multifaceted issue that encompasses various dimensions of caregivers' well-being and quality of life. The caregiver burden has been found to significantly impact the economic, physical, mental, and emotional health of caregivers, as well as their overall quality of life. Economically, caring for persons with severe mental illness can lead to financial constraints, productivity loss, and employment challenges for caregivers, contributing to a substantial economic burden Addo *et al.*, (2018). This economic burden can negatively affect the caregivers' financial stability and overall well-being, highlighting the far-reaching impact of caregiver burden on the economic aspects of caregivers' lives. Furthermore, the impact of mental health and caregiver burden on family caregivers' physical health has been noted, with caregiving for ill family members having negative impacts on caregivers' mental health (Chang *et al.*, 2010). The burden experienced by caregivers can manifest in physical health issues, further exacerbating the toll of caregiving on the well-being of caregivers. Psychologically, caring for individuals with mental illness has been associated with poor psychological health and an increased risk of developing mental illness among caregivers (Wong *et al.*, 2012). The distress experienced due to the increasing care needs of the mentally ill family members compromises the quality of life of the caregivers (Siddiqui & Khalid, 2019). Additionally, caregivers of patients with severe mental disorders experience a heavy stress burden that can manifest as psychiatric symptoms mimicking posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and can negatively impact interpersonal relationships and work performance (Rady *et al.*, 2021). Moreover, the burden of caregiving for persons with mental illness has been found to have a profound impact on the overall quality of life of caregivers. Caregivers suffer from poor psychological health, and some of them may even develop mental illness, indicating the substantial toll of caregiving on the quality of life of caregivers (Wong *et al.*, 2012). The burden of care amongst caregivers who are first-degree relatives of patients with schizophrenia has been associated with increased burden and poorer functioning of the patient, further highlighting the impact on the quality of life of caregivers (Inogbo *et al.*, 2017). In summary, the impact of caregiver burden on persons with mental illness is extensive, affecting various aspects of caregivers' lives, including economic, physical, mental, and emotional well-being, as well as their overall quality of life. Understanding and addressing the multifaceted impact of caregiver burden is crucial for developing targeted interventions and support systems to

alleviate the burden on family caregivers of individuals with mental illness.

Prevention and Treatment of Caregiver Burden for Persons with Mental Illness

Based on the literature review, it is evident that the caregiver burden for persons with mental illness is a complex and multifaceted issue that requires targeted interventions and support systems. The prevention and treatment of caregiver burden for persons with mental illness can be addressed through various strategies and interventions. Chang *et al.*, (2010) highlighted the impact of mental health and caregiver burden on family caregivers' physical health, suggesting the importance of addressing mental health issues and caregiver burden to prevent adverse physical health outcomes among caregivers (Chang *et al.*, 2010). The economic burden of caregiving for persons with severe mental illness indicates the need for interventions to alleviate the financial strain on caregivers (Addo *et al.*, 2018). Meanwhile, the importance of creating community awareness and targeted interventions to reduce burdens among caregivers of people with mental illness, emphasizes the need for community-based support and interventions (Ayalew *et al.*, 2019) targeted interventions should focus on caregivers of patients in hospital settings and with psychotic symptoms, indicating the need for tailored interventions based on the specific caregiving context (Cham *et al.*, 2022). Also, need to address the stress burden experienced by caregivers of patients with severe mental illness, indicating the importance of interventions to mitigate stress and improve caregivers' well-being (Rady *et al.*, 2021). Interventions improving patients' symptoms and decreasing internalized stigma and caregiving burden can help prevent or reduce distress among family caregivers, emphasizing the potential impact of symptom management and stigma reduction interventions (Guan *et al.*, 2020). Many scholars said that caregivers experience a burden due to constant and continuous care for persons with severe mental illness, indicating the need for enhanced support and assistance for caregivers (Majhi & Vasava, 2022). The importance of access to better treatment for people with mental illness in relieving the burden of caregivers, highlights the need for improved mental health services (Olawande *et al.*, 2019). Other scholars indicates that effective coping behaviors used to address challenges presented by mental illness can moderate the effect of caregiving burden on well-being outcomes, suggesting the potential impact of coping skills training for caregivers (Amir Ella, 2015). In summary, the prevention and treatment of caregiver burden for persons with mental illness require a multifaceted approach, including targeted interventions, community awareness, access to better treatment, and support for caregivers' mental health and coping skills. By addressing these factors, it is possible to alleviate the burden on family caregivers of individuals with mental illness and improve their overall well-being.

CONCLUSION

The burden on family caregivers of individuals with mental illness has been extensively studied, with a focus on its impact on the physical and mental health of caregivers, as well as their quality of life. The literature review findings suggest that interventions and support programs are needed to alleviate the burden and improve the quality of life of family caregivers of individuals with mental illness. The burden on family caregivers of individuals with mental illness is a complex and multifaceted issue that encompasses financial, emotional, and psychological challenges. The impact of caregiver burden on caregivers' well-being and quality of life is substantial and requires comprehensive support and interventions to address the diverse needs of caregivers. Therefore, the prevention and treatment of caregiver burden for persons with mental illness require a multifaceted approach, including targeted interventions, community awareness, access to better treatment, and support for caregivers' mental health and coping skills. By addressing these factors, it is possible to alleviate the burden on family caregivers of individuals with mental illness and improve their overall well-being.

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