

# Burden of Care Among Caregivers of Mentally Ill Patient at Tertiary Level Hospital

Rabika Bista,<sup>1</sup> Kalpana Regmi<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Beldagi Primary Health Care Center, Kanchanpur, Nepal, <sup>2</sup>Nepalese Army Institute of Health Sciences, College of Nursing, Bhandarkhal, Sano Bharyang, Nagarjun-2, Kathmandu, Nepal.

## ABSTRACT

### Background

Caregivers of people with mental illnesses are a key support system. The caregivers suffer significant burden as a result of the care giving role. The level of burden of caregivers among people with mental illness is considered to be a negative impact on the care provided by the family to their patient.

### Methods

A descriptive cross sectional research design was used. A total of 96 care givers were selected using purposive sampling technique. The purpose of the study was to assess the burden of care of mentally ill patient among care givers in a selected hospital. The Zarit Burden Interview Scale was use to assess burden care. All the collected data were analyzed by using descriptive statistical method such as frequency, mean, percentage, standard deviation and chi square test to find out the association with level of burden of care and selected demographic variables.

### Results

Nearly one third (31.3%) of caregivers had moderate level of burden and 9.4% of them had severe burden of care. There was significant association between the level of burden of care with sex of the caregivers and their educational level.

### Conclusions

Caregivers had moderate level of burden of care while caring their mentally ill patient. In order to reduce their burden of care, self-help and psycho-educational programs will be effective. This action addresses to improve their perceived knowledge on mental illness and develop coping skills to deal with their patient's behavior.

**Keywords:** burden; caregivers; mentally ill patient.

## INTRODUCTION

Mental illness is characterized by significant disturbance in cognition, emotion and behavioral functioning. This results in huge social and economic burden to individuals' affected by the illness, their families and communities.<sup>1</sup> Burden of caregiver is negative consequences experienced by caregivers of people with mental illness that effect on physical, emotional and financial aspects of caregiver's life.<sup>1</sup> The study conducted in Iran and Pakistan reported that the burden experienced by women care giver

were more than by men and had higher burden with the duration of illness of patient.<sup>3</sup> In Nepal, the prevalence of caregivers burden in family with mental illness is 50% and two third (66%) of them had severe burden.<sup>3, 6</sup> In our context, formal and paid type of care giving is rarely in practice and the family members or relatives take responsibility. This ultimately affects the treatment outcome and increases the chance of relapse mentally people.<sup>7,8</sup> So, the researcher is interested to conduct study regarding burden of care of mentally ill patient

**Correspondence:** Kalpana Regmi, Nepalese Army Institute of Health Sciences, College of Nursing, Bhandarkhal, Sano Bharyang, Nagarjun-2, Kathmandu, Nepal. Email: kalpanaresham17@gmail.com / kalpana\_regmi2003@yahoo.com, Phone: +977-9846155825. **Article received:**2022-09-21. **Article accepted:**2024-01-22.

among care givers.

## METHODS

A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted from 5<sup>th</sup> February to 25<sup>th</sup> February 2022. Ethical approval was taken from the Institutional Review Committee (IRC) of Nepalese Institute of Health Sciences (NAIHS) (Ref No. 245). Written informed consent was obtained from the respondents through proper explanation about research study before the data collection. For assessing the burden experienced by the caregivers, Zarit Burden Interview tool was used. This tool consists of 22 items and total score is 88. Based on the obtained score of the participants, level of burden was interpreted as little or no burden (0-20), mild burden (21-40), moderate burden (41-60) and severe burden (61-88). Pretesting of the tool was carried out in 10% of calculated sample size. No modification was necessary in the tool after pretesting. Collected data was entered in EpiData version 3.1 and then exported to Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS) version 16 for analysis. Frequency, mean, percentage and standard deviation were calculated under descriptive analysis. Chi-square test was used to analyze the association of burden of care with independent variables.

## RESULTS

More than one third (44.8%) of respondents belongs to age group between 29 to 38 years with Mean  $\pm$ SD (36.91  $\pm$ 11.486). Majority (51%) of them were male and most (87.5%) of them followed Hinduism. Similarly, most (81.3%) of them were married and equal proportion (50%) of them were live in urban and rural area (Table 1).

Almost all (96.9%) of the respondents could read and write and nearly half (43.8%) of them were having secondary level of education. Nearly two third (63.5%) of the respondents were employed and involved in service (62.29%) (Table 2).

Majority (40.6%) of them had monthly income between Rs. 20,001 to 30,000 and 46.9% of them belong to joint family. Almost all (91.7%) of them had no any history related to mental illness in their family (Table 3).

**Table 1. Respondents' sge, sex, religion, marital status and permanent residence. (n=96)**

Variables	Frequency (%)
<b>Age of caregivers(years)</b>	
18 – 28	19 (19.8)
29 – 38	43 (44.8)
39 – 48	18 (18.8)
49 – 58	8 (8.3)
59 – 68	8 (8.3)
<b>Mean age<math>\pm</math>SD: 36.91<math>\pm</math>11.486 years</b>	
<b>Sex</b>	
Male	49 (51.0)
Female	47 (49.0)
<b>Religion</b>	
Hinduism	84 (87.5)
Buddhism	6 (6.3)
Christianity	6 (6.3)
<b>Marital Status</b>	
Married	78 (81.3)
Unmarried	18 (18.8)
<b>Permanent Residence</b>	
Rural	48 (50.0)
Urban	48 (50.0)

**Table 2. Respondents' educational status and occupational Status. (n=96)**

Variables	Frequency (%)
<b>Educational Status</b>	
Can't read and write	3 (3.1)
Can read and write	93 (96.9)
<b>Level of education (n=93)</b>	
Informal	14 (14.5)
Elementary level( 1-8)	14 (14.6)
Secondary level(9- 12)	42 (43.8)
Bachelor level and above	23 (24.0)
<b>Occupational status</b>	
Employed	61 (63.5)
Unemployed	35 (36.5)
<b>If employed (n=61)</b>	
Business	15 (24.59)
Service	38 (62.29)
Agriculture	5 (8.19)
Daily wages worker	3 (4.91)

Table 4 showed that regarding level of burden of care, highest proportion (40.6%) of respondents had little or no burden, 18.8% had mild level of burden, 31.3% had moderate level of burden and 9.4% of them had severe burden of care which need great intervention. Table 5 notified that there was significant association between level of burden of care with sex ( $p=0.018$ ) and level of education ( $p=0.023$ ) whereas there was no

Variables	Frequency (%)
<b>Monthly income of family (NRP)</b>	
≤10000	2 (2.1)
10001-20000	24 (25.0)
20001-30000	30 (31.3)
30001-40000	18 (18.8)
>40000	22 (22.9)
<b>Types of family</b>	
Nuclear family	42 (43.8)
Joint Family	45 (46.9)
Extended family	9 (9.4)
<b>Family history of mental illness</b>	
Yes	8 (8.3)
No	88 (91.7)

Level of burden of care	Frequency (%)
Little or no burden (0-21)	39 (40.6)
Mild burden (21-40)	18 (18.8)
Moderate burden (41-60)	30 (31.3)
Severe burden (61-88)	9 (9.4)

Characteristics	Level of burden			
	In significant burden	Significant burden	Chi- square value	p-value
<b>Age (In years)</b>				
≤33	31(32.3)	11(11.5)	6.78	0.79
>34	26(27)	28(29.2)		
<b>Sex</b>				
Male	36(37.5)	13(13.5)	10.065	0.018*
Female	21(21.9)	26(27.1)		
<b>Marital Status</b>				
Married	43(44.8)	35(36.5)	4.097	0.251
Unmarried	14(14.5)	4(4.2)		
<b>level of education (n=93)</b>				
Up to Elementary level	12(12.9)	16(17.2)	19.272	0.023*
Secondary level and above	42(45.2)	23(24.7)		
<b>Monthly income</b>				
≤30,000	32(33.3)	24(25)	1.955	0.582
>30,000	25(26.1)	15(15.6)		

\*p-value is significant at <0.05  
significant association between level of burden of care with other selected socio-demographic characteristics such as age, marital status and monthly income.

## DISCUSSION

Caregivers are the person who take the major responsibility of caregiving for a mentally ill individual and have to undergo undesirable levels of burden. The caregivers are in need of support and understanding. Moreover, the mentally ill patient can dominate them due to which there may be a rise in distress and it may affect their ability to handle the crisis.<sup>9</sup> The findings of the present study revealed that highest proportion (40.6%) of the respondents had no burden of care, nearly one third (31.3%) of the respondents experienced moderate level of burden and 9.6% of them had severe level of burden of care. This is consistent with the findings conducted by Dhimi J and Tuladhar S which showed that 27.8% caregivers had moderate burden and few of the caregivers (6.2%) has severe level of burden.<sup>14</sup> This finding is also in line with the study conducted by Pokharel et al. which showed 27.4% of the respondents had mild to moderate level of burden and 13.9% had high level of burden of care. These

findings suggest that still burden of care among caregiver has not been reduced and there is need to take appropriate action promptly.<sup>10</sup> These findings

suggest that still burden of care among care giver is constant and there is need to take appropriate action promptly. Another study conducted in Psychiatric department of BPKIHS among 100 caregivers showed that 66% had severe level of burden and only 6% of the respondents had mild to moderate level of burden of care which result is contrast with the present study findings.<sup>6</sup>This may be due to difference in study setting and specific population. However, these study findings are inconsistent with another study conducted in Upper Egypt which revealed that 62.60 % of the caregivers had moderate to severe level of burden of care.<sup>11</sup> Comparing with these study findings, high prevalence of burden experienced by caregiver could be because of more severe illness, as our study setting was also a tertiary center where patient with more severe illness tend to report than neurotic disorders. This may be due to the difference in sample size, study setting and cultural practices of the respondents. While talking about level of burden of care, we found statistically significant association with sex ( $p=0.018$ ) and level of education ( $p=0.023$ ). This is supported by another study conducted in Patan Hospital in which level of burden of care significantly associated with level of education ( $p=0.01$ ).<sup>12</sup> Similarly, a related study conducted in Universal College of Medical Sciences Bhairahawa, is consistent with the study, found that significant association between level of burden of care with level of education.<sup>13</sup> Another study conducted in PHC of Kavre and Sindhupalchowk district also supported the present study findings in which level of burden

of care is also having significant association with sex ( $p=0.01$ ) and level of education ( $p=0.03$ ).<sup>3</sup> The study is limited in a single center of tertiary care hospital located in Kathmandu valley. This study might be useful to the authorities of concerned hospital in planning the psycho-education program, counseling services, stress management techniques for the caregiver of mentally ill patients timely. Similar study can also be conducted in different setting to find out various coping measures by the caregivers and associated factors of burden of care while caring for a relative with mental illness in order to generalize the findings.

## CONCLUSIONS

Caregivers have high prevalence of burden of care while caring their mentally ill patient. The socio-demographic variables like sex and level of education of caregivers tend to affect the level of burden of care among caregivers. Caregivers coping strategies for handling burden of care should be regularly taught to caregivers through support programmes. Screening for probable psychological morbidity and burden of care help for early identification and prompt intervention.

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