

Comparison of Quality of Life of Care Giver of Chronic Psychiatric and Chronic Medical Patients

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Abstract— *Chronically ill patients need assistance or supervision in their daily activities often placing a major burden on caregivers, placing them at a great risk of mental and physical problems and an impaired quality of life. An observational analytical study conducted in year 2013 in SMS Medical College, Jaipur aiming to compare the quality of life (QOL) of caregivers of patients with chronic psychiatric disorders with that of chronic medical illnesses. WHO-QOL BREF was used to assess quality of life in both the groups. It was observed that quality of life of caregivers of chronic psychiatric illness were significantly ($p < 0.05$) poorer than quality of life of caregivers of chronic medical illness and that too more in Psychosocial domain followed by social, environmental and physical domain.*

Keywords— *Care Givers, Quality of Life, Psychiatric illness, Chronic Medical Illness*

1. Introduction

Chronic illnesses, exert a burden on family members for their effect on the patient's symptoms, mood, and need for emotional and physical support^{1,2,3,4}. Chronically ill patients need assistance or supervision in their daily activities often placing a major burden on caregivers, placing them at a great risk of mental and physical problems and an impaired quality of life. In developing countries like India, the trend of deinstitutionalization places considerable burden for family caregivers who takes the sole responsibility of taking care of chronically ill patients⁵. In the health field, quality of life (QoL) is one of the most important components associated with delivering an integral service to an ill person and their family, emphasizing the subjective perspective held by the patient and the family. QoL of caregivers is affected in many ways like: through their direct and indirect effects⁶. In India there is paucity of studies in this field whereas it has been reported extensively in studies done abroad. So this study was aimed to compare the quality of life (QOL) of caregivers of patients with chronic psychiatric disorders with that of chronic medical illnesses in Indian setting.

2. Methodology

Chronic illnesses, After approval from institutional research review board and ethical committee this hospital based analytic type of observational study was conducted in department of Psychiatry and Medicine of SMS Hospital Jaipur. Patients of chronic psychiatric illness of atleast 2 years duration from OPD of Psychiatry were identified. The diagnosis of chronic psychiatric illness was made according to ICD-10⁷ on independent interview by two psychiatrists. Similarly patients with chronic Medical Illness (Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease) of atleast 2 years duration undergoing treatment at Medical Out-Patient Department were also identified. Healthy caregivers either a blood relation or spouse, residing for atleast 2 years with selected patients were included in the study. These care givers considered in both the groups were of age from 18 to 60 years of either sex, so that extremes of ages

may be avoided which can be confounding for QoL. Likewise, care givers with co-existing other significant physical or mental disease which may interfere in interviewing for QoL from both the groups were excluded from the study. Finally 60 care givers of Chronic psychiatric and 60 care givers of chronic medical illness patients were included for study. These care givers were interviewed by using a especially designed semi-structured proforma i.e. WHO QOL Brief. Qol of care givers of both the groups were assessed and compared with the use of chi-square and unpaired 't' test of significance.

3. Results

In this study, patients of both the groups i.e. chronic psychiatric illness and chronic medical illness were comparable as per sex, religion, family type & locality, however sex ratio was skewed towards male in Chronic medical illness group but it was not found significant ($p>0.05$). Mean of the patient of chronic psychiatric group was significantly lower than the chronic medical illness group i.e. 35.33 v/s 48.4 years. Likewise significantly ($p<0.05$) more single/divorcees/widowers/separated persons found in chronic psychiatric than chronic medical illness group. Although mean age at onset of their illness was also having significant difference i.e. 27.57 years and 39.9 years in chronic psychiatric and chronic medical illness group respectively but regarding duration of illness there was no significant difference ($p>0.05$) in both the groups. (Table 1)

Table No. 1

Comparisons of Socio-demographic Profile of Patients of both the Groups

S. No.	Variables	Patients of Chronic Psychiatric Illness (N=60)	Patients of Chronic Medical Illness (N=60)	*Value of Test of Significant	P value	LS
1	Age (Mean $\pm$ SD) Years	35.33 $\pm$ 12.01	48.4 $\pm$ 12.42	5. at 118 DF	<0.001	S
2	Sex (M:F)	30:30	40:20	2.78 at 1 DF	0.096	NS
3	Marital Status (M:O)	36:24	60:0	27.55 at 1 DF	<0.001	S
4	Religion (H: Other)	50:10	54: 6	0.649 at 1 DF	0.420	NS
5	Family Type (J: Other)	8:52	14:46	1.139 at 1 DF	0.238	NS
6	Locality of Residence (U: Other)	46:14	40:20	1.026 at 1 DF	0.311	NS
7	Age at Onset of Illness (Mean $\pm$ SD) Years	27.57 $\pm$ 9.88	39.9 $\pm$ 12.24	6.075 at 118 DF	<0.001	S
8	Duration of Illness (Mean $\pm$ SD) Years	7.78 $\pm$ 6.69	8.5 $\pm$ 7.33	0.562 at 118 DF	0.580	NS

*Variable No. '2' and '3' Chi-square test in others Unpaired 't' test

When comparison of caregivers of both the groups is concerned it was observed in this study that both the groups were comparable as per age, sex, religion, family type & locality (Table 1),

however sex ratio was skewed towards male in both groups. Majority of caregivers were graduate but unemployed in both the groups but belonging to the family having more than Rs 15000 per capita income. Majority of care givers were 1st degree relatives and living with the patient more than 20 years in both the groups. So both the groups were well comparable as per education and occupation of care givers as well as according to relation of care giver with patient and duration living together with patient.(Table 2)

Table No. 2

Comparisons of Socio-demographic Profile of Care-givers of both the Patients Groups

S. No.	Variables	Patients of Chronic Psychiatric Illness (N=60)	Patients of Chronic Medical Illness (N=60)	*Value of Test of Significant	P value	LS
1	Age (Mean $\pm$ SD) Years	36.83 $\pm$ 11.46	34.11 $\pm$ 10.22	1.38 at 118 DF	0.171	NS
2	Sex (M:F)	50:10	54:6	0.649 at 1 DF	0.420	NS
3	Marital Status (M:Other)	44:16	44:16	0 at 1 DF	1	NS
4	Religion (H: Other)	50:10	54: 6	0.649 at 1 DF	0.420	NS
5	Family Type (J: Other)	8:52	14:46	1.139 at 1 DF	0.238	NS
6	Locality of Residence (U: Other)	46:14	40:20	1.026 at 1 DF	0.311	NS
7	Occupation (Un: Other)	22:38	16:44	0.963 at 1 DF	0.326	NS
8	Education (Gr: Other)	24:36	28:32	0.305 at 1 DF	0.580	NS
9	Income (>15000 pc: Other)	28:32	24:36	0.305 at 1 DF	0.580	NS
10	Relation to Patient (1 ST Degree Relatives: Other)	30:30	41:19	3.449 at 1 DF	0.063	NS
11	Duration with Patient (Mean $\pm$ SD) Years	22.33 $\pm$ 8.8	25.03 $\pm$ 8.07	-1.752 at 118 DF	0.082	NS

*Variable No. '1' and '11' Unpaired 't' test in others Chi-square test

It was also revealed in this study that overall quality of life of care givers of chronic psychiatric group was significantly lower than the chronic medical illness group (WHOQOL Bref score 98.37 v/s 104.44 respectively). When Qol domains were concerned, although care givers of chronic psychiatric group was having significantly lower quality of life than the chronic medical illness group in all the four domains but it was found maximum suffering in psychological domain followed by social, environmental and physical domain of Qol. (Table 3)

Table No. 3

Comparisons of Quality of Life of Care-givers of both the Patients Groups

S. No.	Variables	Quality of Life Scores of Care givers		*Value of Test of Significant	P value	LS
		Psychiatric Patients	Medical Illness Patients			
1	Physical	28.97 ± 2.56	30.23 ± 3.12	-2.43 at 118 DF	0.022	S
2	Psychological	22.06 ± 2.73	24.27 ± 1.99	-5.04 at 118 DF	<0.001	S
3	Social	12.05 ± 1.67	13.53 ± 1.07	-3.67 at 118 DF	0.012	S
4	Environmental	27.80 ± 3.24	29.43 ± 3.37	-2.700 at 118 DF	0.012	S
Total WHO QOL Bref Score		98.37 ± 6.97	104.44 ± 7.99	-4.460 at 118 DF	<0.001	S

* Unpaired 't' test

4. Discussion:

It was also found in this study that mean age of chronic psychiatric patients was lesser than medical patients (35.33 years Vs 48.40 years respectively) almost similar observations were made by previous studies conducted by Murat Iihan et al⁸, Renata A. Pinto et al⁹, Sanjeev Kumar et al¹⁰, G.P.Gujrati et al¹¹. This may be explained that chronic medical illnesses usually occurs later in life.

Married subjects were significantly lesser in patients of psychiatric group than patients of chronic medical illness group. These observations were in consistent with previous studies like Renata et al⁹ and Sanjeev Kumar et al¹⁰. This less proportion of married patients of psychiatric group than patients of chronic medical illness group may be explained by the fact that chronic psychiatric illnesses develop at a early age and carry great social stigma leading to problems in marriage.

In this study, although the family type comparison of caregivers of both the groups was statistically not significant but more caregivers of chronic psychiatric illnesses belonged to nuclear family as compared to the caregivers of chronic medical illnesses. These observations were well in resonance with findings observed by Surjeet sahu et al¹², who observed that the 66.68% caregivers of mentally ill clients belonged to nuclear family whereas more caregivers were observed in case of caregivers of medical illnesses.

This study was conducted with the aim to compare the Quality of life of caregivers of patients with chronic psychiatric and chronic medical illnesses. Results of the study showed that quality of life of caregivers of chronic psychiatric illnesses patients was poorer than caregivers of chronic medical illnesses patients which consistent with the findings that were observed by other authors like Gallagher and Mechanic et al¹³, G.P. Gururaj et al¹¹, Daniel- Fu Keung Wong et al¹⁴ & Sandeep Grover et al¹⁵.

CONCLUSIONS

In comparable groups of care givers of chronic psychiatric group was having significantly lower quality of life than the care givers of chronic medical illness group in all the four domains but it was found maximum sufferings in psychological domain followed by social, environmental and physical domain of Qol.

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