

Poster presentation

Psychiatric morbidity and burden among caregivers: a cross sectional study in rural north Halkidiki (Greece)

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Background

This study is concerned with the health needs of informal caregivers of frail elderly. Its objective is the assessment of the caregiving profile, the examination of the caregivers burden and morbidity and the investigation of the factors which contribute at this burden.

Materials and methods

A cross sectional study was designed and conducted at two municipalities of northern Halkidiki. The elderly and their caregivers were found via the municipality and European Community co-funded program "home care". The researchers interviewed participants using a questionnaire consisted of demographic, social condition and health need data, the Zarit Burden Interview (ZBI), as well as the General Health Questionnaire-28 (GHQ-28), both translated and standardized in Greek.

Results

The majority of caregivers were women (46 female, 5 male). They offer their care giving services for many hours per week, with a median of 70 hours per week, ranging from 14 to 112. Using the ZBI, we found that 11.2% of the caregivers experience "no to low" burden, 39.2% "mild to moderate", 39.2% "moderate to severe" and 9.8% "severe" burden. The mean average score of the responses to ZBI was 39.69 (SD: ± 16.29). Caregivers experiencing severe burden tend to take care of the elderly for more hours than those without severe burden, whilst the more hours devoted to care-giving the higher the ZBI score is

(Spearman's correlation coefficient: 0.48, $p < 0.001$). Duration of care-giving also does not appear related to burden of care. 84.3% of caregivers gave a score which was above the cut-off point 4/5 of the GHQ-28, and the higher percentage (82.4%) of morbid responses was given at the subscale of anxiety. Caregivers with a GHQ score above the cut-off point experience a more severe burden of care (Spearman's correlation coefficient: 0.456, $p = 0.001$) and also have rate their health in a lower level (Spearman's correlation coefficient: 0.329, $p = 0.018$).

Conclusions

Gender, age, relation with elderly, activities of daily living and the duration of care-giving don't seem to have any statistically significant relation with the burden of care. On the contrary, hours of care-giving per week and GHQ scoring are positively associated with increase of burden and with lower levels of self rated health.

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