

Effectiveness of Psychosocial Interventions for Family Caregivers of Persons with Serious Mental Illnesses: A Systematic Review

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Short Communication

Abstract

World Health Organisation estimated that one in four people among the global population will be affected by mental or neurological disorders at some point in their lives and 3.4% accounts for Depression, 0.6% accounts for Bipolar Affective Disorder and 0.3% accounts for Schizophrenia, which are considered as serious mental illnesses. Families have been the mainstay of caregiving for persons with mental illnesses and they are the essential partners in the delivery of major health care services. The family caregivers, typically spouse, children, parents, in-laws or relatives play a multiple roles in care of mentally ill persons. The provision of informal care over prolonged periods of time can have profound consequences in the caregiver, as it creates more frustration, distress, sadness, burden, ill-health and disruption in their daily life. Effective caregiver interventions can improve the quality of life of both the caregiver and the care recipient and enhance caregiving. The content of psychosocial interventions for family caregivers (FCGs) of persons with serious mental illnesses (PWSMI) is highly varied. None of the studies conducted to date have focussed on evaluating the effectiveness of contents of these interventions and the issue is not well understood. This systematic review aimed to explore evidence-based psychosocial interventions implemented for the FCGs of PWSMI, to assess their effectiveness and to give implications for further practice and research. The primary data search was performed with predefined protocol in online electronic databases including PubMed, EBSCOhost, Cochrane library and ProQuest. Experimental studies on psychological and social interventions for the FCGs of PWSMI such as Schizophrenia, Bipolar Affective Disorder and Major Depression published after 2009 were retrieved, systemically reviewed and graded for quality of evidence. After screening for necessary inclusion criteria, eight studies on psychosocial interventions for the FCGs of PWSMI were included in the final review. Integrated and collaborative care had significantly improved the psychosocial wellbeing of the family caregivers. The interventions included psychotherapies, tele-counselling, social group work, psycho-education and family-based interventions focussing on enhancing mental wellbeing, reducing distress, improving mental health literacy and caregiving, modifying lifestyle and preventing complications. Despite reported limitations, there is effectiveness of psychological and social interventions for FCGs of PWSMI. However, paucity of literature from developing countries and the limitations of the existing studies warrant further collaborative and tailor-made interventions for enhancing the mental health of family caregivers and effective caregiving.

Biography

Ms Anjana N is the PhD Scholar in the Department of Social Work in CHRIST (Deemed to be University), Bangalore, India. Completed her Masters in Social Work with First rank from Rajagiri College of Social Sciences and graduated in Nursing. She attended a Short-term course on Disability and International Development from University of Melbourne, Australia. She was awarded with Sr Mary Glowrey Scholarship (CHAI), Junior Research Fellowship (UGC-NET), received the best Outgoing Student award and Best Fieldworker in Medical and Psychiatric Social Work specialization during her MSW Programme.

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