

16th World Congress on

Psychiatry and Psychological Syndromes

April 24-25, 2017 Las Vegas, USA

Quality of life of caregivers of patients with mental illness in Penang

Neong Shuet Ching
Penang General Hospital, Malaysia

Introduction: The prevalence of mental disorders in the developed countries especially in the European Union is at a staggering high of 38.2%. In developing countries, the prevalence of major depressive disorder has been reported as 2.2% in Chinese men from China and 3.5% in Indian men from India. The prevalence of mental health illness among the population in Malaysia has risen from 11% to a staggering 20% in the past 10 years. This is according to the National Health and Morbidity Survey 2011. According to the recent National Health Morbidity Survey 2015, the prevalence of mental disorders in Malaysia was higher at 29.2% for the population 16 years and above.

Objectives: To determine the quality of life of the caregivers of patients with mental illness on follow up in two public hospitals providing outpatient psychiatric services and also to determine the association of demographic factors of caregivers on the quality of life of caregivers of patients with mental illness.

Methodology: 221 patients were chosen using a simple random sampling method using the computer software, R for Randomization. This simple random sampling method is adapted from the computer generated list of random numbers. It is a type of probability sampling technique where there is an equal chance of selecting each patient. A frame was created using the total number of inpatients discharged from Penang Hospital and 300 patients were randomly selected. This number was chosen as it is the total number of outpatients in Penang Hospital for the past two months. Another frame of 214 patients was created using the total number of outpatients for the past two months in Bukit Mertajam Hospital.

Results: There is an association between caregiver's highest level of education and QOL scores. Caregivers with higher level of education have a better QOL compared to caregivers with lower education levels. Married caregivers fare better while divorced caregivers fare the worst. Malays have a better mean QOL scores compared to Indians and Chinese. Caregivers of Malay patients have better mean QOL scores compared to Indian and Chinese patients. Caregivers of Indian patients and caregivers of Chinese patients have the worst QOL. Patient's occupation also determines the QOL of caregivers, caregivers of managers having the worst QOL, while caregivers of plant and machine operators and assemblers having the best QOL, followed by caregivers of housewives and caregivers of clerical support workers.

Conclusion: In conclusion, this study has found that there is association between caregiver factors and caregivers QOL and patient factors and caregivers QOL.

Biography

Neong Shuet Ching is a Doctor practicing in the Public Health Unit in Penang General Hospital in Malaysia. She has her passion in public health and the wellbeing of the mental health in the general population. She has done Psychiatry in both the hospital and as Locum Doctor to the general population in Penang. She is active in the Public Health and is a Fellow of Royal Society of Public Health from the UK.

scneong@yahoo.co.uk

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