The Experience of Family Caregivers Who Have Mental Health Problems

Gordon MacNeil
Daniel Durkin
(University of Alabama)
Gail Williamson
(University of Georgia)
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• Abundant literature documents the stresses and burden experienced by family members providing care to older relatives, especially when the caregiving is long-term.
• comparing the experiences of family caregivers reporting mental health problems (MHPs) to those who do not report mental health problems
We hypothesized that caregivers with MHP would report higher levels of:

- Perceived Stress and Life Events Stress,
- Physical health problems,
- Resentment about caregiving,
- Potentially Harmful Behavior (PHB) toward their care recipients.

- Change between Time 1 and Time 2 in PHB would be significant for the caregivers with MHP and not for the comparison group.
DWD1  Put this on another slide?
Daniel W Durkin, 1/15/2011

DWD2  Added this here and throughout
Daniel W Durkin, 1/15/2011
Methods

• Recruited through various methods, including random digit dialing
• Recruited from Alabama, Georgia, and Pittsburg, PA
• 444 co-residing caregiver (CG)-care recipient (CR) dyads in sample
• Care Recipient was over 60 years of age
• CR & CG simultaneously administered 18 standardized measures related to the caregiving experience.

• Longitudinal design- dyads interviewed 3 times, 18 month intervals
  (Data reported here are from CGs time 1 and time 2)
Grouping variables

• In the last year have you had, or has a doctor told you that you have emotional or psychiatric problems such as depression or anxiety?

• Are you currently taking, or have you in the last year taken medications for a mental health problem?
• 18% (n=77) of the CGs reported having psychological or psychiatric problems

• 5% of the dyads, both the CG and CR experienced psychiatric problems.
• 7% of all caregivers reported seeking mental health services within the past year.

• Of caregivers seeking MH services, 79% were from the MHCG group

• Only 30% of MHCG reported seeking or receiving mental health services in the past year
Life Events Stress

• Time 1
  • MHCG mean 3.73 \( F = 7.30 \) \( p. = .007 \)
  • CG mean 2.24

• Time 2
  • MHCG mean 3.2 \( F = 13.4 \) \( p. = .000 \)
  • CG mean 1.8

• Within groups n.s.
Perceived Stress

Time 1
MH CG mean 7.08  F= 3.775  p. = .05
CG mean 4.17

Time 2
MH CG mean 6.30
CG mean 3.96

Within group – n.s.
Resentment

T1
• MH CG mean 40.8  F= 9.17  p. = .03
• CG mean 29.8

T2
• MH CG mean 39.8  F= 5.06  p. = .02
• CG mean 28.2

• Within groups- n.s.
Angry Responses

Time 1
• MHCG mean 15.7  F= 5.13  p. = .02
• CG mean 13.0

Time 2
• MHCG mean 14.60  F = 8.1  p. = .005
• CG mean 12.80

• Within groups n.s.
Potentially Harmful Behaviors (PHB)

• Time 1
  • MHCG mean 1.95  F = 12.30  p. = .001
  • CG mean .93

• Time 2
  • MHCG mean 1.46  F = 18.85  p. = .000
  • CG mean .70

• Within groups n.s.
Implications

Caregivers with mental health challenges:
- experience higher levels of resentment about their caregiving responsibilities
- respond in anger more than other caregivers
- perceive that they have much more stress than other caregivers
- Experience more disruptive life events
- Report having poorer health status
• It is likely that issues and concerns that caregivers with mental health problems result in compromised caregiving

• Assessing the physical and mental health of caregivers, and assertively providing services to caregivers who need mental health treatment will likely result in more stable caregiving-care receipt relationships