A study to evaluate the effectiveness of family intervention package on perceived burden, coping ability and family functioning of caregivers and level of functioning of patients with chronic schizophrenia in selected hospitals in Trivandrum

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ABSTRACT

The present study aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of family intervention package on perceived burden, coping ability, family functioning of caregivers and level of functioning of patients with chronic schizophrenia. Quasi experimental non equivalent control group design was adopted for the study. 177 subjects were recruited for the study from three hospitals in Trivandrum by consecutive sampling method. Study sample constituted 52 patient caregiver dyads in experimental group and 50 patient caregiver dyads in control group. Family intervention package comprised of 3 sessions that were 45 min in length with an additional 15 min discussion/question time. The intervention was done with a small group of 8-10 members to be completed over the period of a month. Data were collected using standardized tools. There were longitudinal assessment at 1 month, 3 month and 6 months of intervention. Results revealed that caregivers perceived burden mostly in the financial and patient behavior aspects. There was significant (p< 0.01) difference between control and experimental group in burden subscales of patient behavior, family relations and social support at 1 month after intervention. Caregivers adopted more of religious coping and social support as coping strategies. There was significant (p<0.01) difference in coping skills between control and experimental group after intervention. Forty three (43)% of families were unhealthy and 57% were healthy in the present study. There was significant (p<0.01) improvement in family functioning in experimental group after intervention at 1 month, 3 month, and 6 month compared to control group.

Seventy five (75) % of patients had moderate functioning. Fifty five (55) % of patients had good level of functioning in experimental group and only 32% of patients had good functioning in control group at 1 month. At 3 month and 6 month follow-up assessment, statistically significant improvements were found in caregiver perceived burden, coping, family functioning as well as patients' symptoms between control and experimental group. Acceptance coping was significantly (<0.05) high among healthy families compared to unhealthy families. Family role function and patient behavior subscales of burden were associated with patient functioning. Caregivers in urban area had higher burden compared to rural area. Male caregivers used more negative distraction whereas female caregivers adopted religious coping and social support coping strategies. Family functioning is associated with relationship and type of family.
Patient functioning is associated with caregiver gender, relationship, domicile, patient gender, occupation and type of family. Family intervention should be a routine activity of the hospital where nurses have to take up significant responsibilities.

**Key words:** family intervention, burden, coping, family functioning, patient functioning