

BURDEN OF CARE IN DIRECT CAREGIVERS OF CHILDREN WITH TYPE 1 DIABETES

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Background

The treatment of type 1 diabetes is a process that involves not only sick children but also their caregivers. Parents undertake various actions towards their child aiming at reaching diabetes management targets, which can make the disease a significant challenge for the whole family.

Aim

To assess the burden of care for direct caregivers of children with type 1 diabetes.

Method

The study included 125 caregivers who reported to a diabetes clinic with their child for a follow-up visit. The mean age of the caregivers was 39 years (SD = 6.43) and the mean age of the children was 11 years (SD = 3.55). The Caregiver Burden Scale (CB Scale) was used to collect the study material.

Result

The caregivers displayed the highest burden of care on the general strain subscale: 2.4 (SD = 0.67) and disappointment subscale: 2.36 (SD = 0.75). The analysis of different statements included in the burden scale demonstrated that 30% of caregivers often feel tired, 29% of them often think that taking care of the child is mentally exhausting, 22% often feel that they have too much responsibility over childcare, 21% often experience physical fatigue, while 19% often worry that they take care of their child in a wrong way. Analysis demonstrated that women experience a higher burden of care than men on the general strain subscale (M = 2.45 and M = 2.15, respectively) and emotional involvement subscale (M = 1.68 and M = 1.38, respectively). The burden of care was higher in unemployed caregivers (p = 0.045). The burden of care decreased with the child's age (p = 0.030).

Conclusion

Direct caregivers of children with diabetes generally experience a moderate burden of care. The study identified factors which increase the sense of burden of care in caregivers. These include female sex, unemployment and younger age of the sick child.

Keywords: Type 1 diabetes, child, caregiver, burden of care