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A Buffering Role of Perceived Social Support and Resilience between Caregiver Burden and Perceived Stress among Informal Caregivers of Dementia Elderly Patients

Background

The psychological health of caregivers of dementia patients is at risk due to excessive burden, stress, and emotional strain. The study aimed to investigate the relationship between caregiver burden, perceived stress, resilience, and perceived social support among informal caregivers of dementia patients.

Method

A purposive and snowball sampling technique was used to recruit a sample of 101 adult informal caregivers (immediate family members) of dementia patients, ranging in age from 18 to 60 years. Data were collected using English versions of the Caregiver Burden Scale (Zarit, 1980), the Brief Resilience Scale (Smith et al., 2008), the Perceived Stress Scale (Cohen, Kamarck, & Mermelstein, 1983), and the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (Zimet et al., 1988). SPSS - 27 and PROCESS Macro (Model 6) by Hayes (2022) were employed for data analysis.

Result

The findings supported the hypothesized relationships among all tested variables. Serial mediation revealed that perceived social support and resilience partially mediated the relationship between caregiver burden and perceived stress. However, no significant interaction was found between perceived social support and resilience in predicting perceived stress. The results suggest that both perceived social support and resilience are important buffers between caregiver burden and perceived stress. Additionally, sociodemographic analyses indicated that the caregiver burden varied according to the type of caregiving responsibilities informal caregivers provided.

Conclusion

The study expands existing caregiving models by testing the buffering roles of social support and resilience among Pakistan informal dementia caregivers. The study highlights that, alongside elderly patients, their informal caregivers also require psychological support and intervention. It emphasizes the importance of developing intervention-based programs to reduce excessive burden and perceived stress among informal caregivers of dementia patients in Pakistan.

Keywords: Dementia, caregivers of dementia, Alzheimer's, elderly/old population Gerontology, Longterm Care, Ageing