

Psychological and Social Problems among Spouses of Mentally Ill Patients: A Descriptive Study

Rachna Nautiyal¹, Anil Malviya²

¹M.Sc. Nursing (Mental Health Nursing) Ph.D. Scholar Associate Professor Rajasthan College of Nursing, Jaipur

² (Research Guide H.O.D. Mental Health Nursing) Professor, Jaipur Hospital College of Nursing, Jaipur

Corresponding Author:

Ms. Rachna Nautiyal

M.Sc. Nursing (Mental Health Nursing) Ph.D. Scholar Associate Professor Rajasthan College of Nursing, Jaipur

Email: princisnsbala2020@gmail.com

How to cite this article: Nautiyal R, Malviya A. Psychological and Social Problems among Spouses of Mentally Ill Patients: A Descriptive Study. GFNPSS-IJMR 2023; 4:7: 2334-2338

Submitted: 25-June-2023; **Modification:** 20-July-2023; **Accepted:** 27-July-2023; **Published:** 4-August-2023

Abstract:

Introduction: This descriptive study aimed to assess the level of psychological and social problems experienced by spouses of mentally ill patients attending the Outpatient Department (OPD) in Jaipur, and to develop an information booklet to provide support and guidance to address their needs effectively.

Materials & Methods: A cross-sectional design was employed, and data were collected from a sample of 100 spouses using a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire included demographic information and a rating scale to assess psychological and social problems. Descriptive and inferential statistical methods were used for data analysis.

Results: The findings revealed a significant level of psychological and social problems among spouses of mentally ill patients. Psychological problems such as stress, anxiety, and depression were prevalent, while social problems included social isolation and difficulties in maintaining relationships. The study also found associations between certain demographic factors, such as age and type of family, and the level of problems experienced by the spouses.

Conclusions: Spouses of mentally ill patients attending the OPD in Jaipur face notable psychological and social problems. Healthcare providers should recognize and address the specific challenges faced by these individuals. The development of an information booklet tailored to their needs can serve as a valuable resource, offering support, guidance, and practical strategies to enhance their well-being. Further research and interventions are required to effectively address the psychological and social needs of this population.

Keywords: Spouse, mental illness, psychological problems, social problems

Introduction:

Mental illnesses not only have a profound impact on individuals diagnosed with such conditions but also affect their families, particularly their spouses. The burden of caring for a mentally ill spouse can lead to a range of psychological and social problems for the spouse, often resulting in significant distress and challenges in their daily lives.(1)

Prevalence data indicates that the challenges faced by spouses of mentally ill patients are prevalent and warrant attention. (2)

Furthermore, research suggests that spouses of mentally ill patients are at an increased risk of developing mental health problems themselves. According to a study conducted by Whisman and colleagues (2020), the prevalence of depression and anxiety disorders was higher among spouses of individuals with mental illnesses compared to spouses in the general population.(3)

Therefore, it is crucial to conduct research that explores and assesses the specific challenges faced by these spouses and provides appropriate support to improve their well-being. Mental illnesses can have a profound impact on the well-being and functioning of individuals.(4) Spouses play a crucial role in providing care, support, and stability to their partners, and they often face numerous challenges while fulfilling this role.(5) Caring for a mentally ill spouse can be emotionally and psychologically demanding, leading to increased stress, anxiety, depression, and decreased quality of life for the caregiver spouse.(6)

Materials & Methods:

This study adopted a descriptive research approach, focusing on systematically observing, describing, and analyzing phenomena as they naturally occurred. The research design employed in this study was cross-sectional, allowing for the collection of data at a specific point in time. The study was conducted in a selected department of psychiatric SMS Hospital in Jaipur, which comprised the Outpatient Department (OPD) of a mental health facility, with a pilot study conducted at Manomaya Holistic Mental Health Centre, Jaipur. The setting was chosen based on its accessibility, availability of the sample, and relevance to the research objectives. The population for this study consisted of spouses of mentally ill patients attending the OPD in the selected setting. A sample size of 100 spouses was selected using purposive sampling technique.

The inclusion criteria for the sample included willingness to participate, availability during data collection, and the ability to read and write in Hindi or English. Spouses who were unable to understand Hindi or unwilling to participate were excluded.

Results

Table 1: shows the frequency of percentage distribution of demographic variables among the spouses.
n=100

	DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES	FREQUENCY
1.	Age	
A.	18-30	17
B.	31-40	37
C.	41-50	30
D.	51 and above	16
2.	Gender	
A.	Male	54
B.	Female	46
3.	EDUCATION	
A.	No formal education.	35
B.	Primary	11
C.	Senior secondary	42
D.	Graduates or more.	12
4.	Religion	
A.	Hindu	91
B.	Muslim	9
C.	Christians	
D.	Others	
5	Locality	
A.	Urban	31
B.	Rural	69
6	Monthly Income	
A.	Below 10000	65
B.	Between 10001 TO 20000	21
C.	Between 20001 TO 30000	6
D.	Above 40000	8
7	Type of family	
A.	Joint family	62
B.	Nuclear family	38
8	Number of children	
A.	0	6
B.	1	13
C.	2	26
D.	More than 2.	55
9	OCCUPATION.	
A.	Unemployment	17
B.	Government service	6

C.	Private service	31
D.	Others	46
10	YEARS OF MARRIAGE	
A.	Below 5 years.	10
B.	6 to 15 years	24
C.	16 TO 25 Years.	25
D.	Above 26 Years.	41

Table 2: Area wise Mean, Mean % and SD of knowledge scores of spouse of mentally ill Patient.
N=100

Area wise Problems .	Max. Score	Mean	Median	SD	MEAN PERECNTAGE
Psychological problems.	90	42.04	41.50	12.116	46.71 %
Social problems.	90	39.42	37.50	13.605	43.8 %

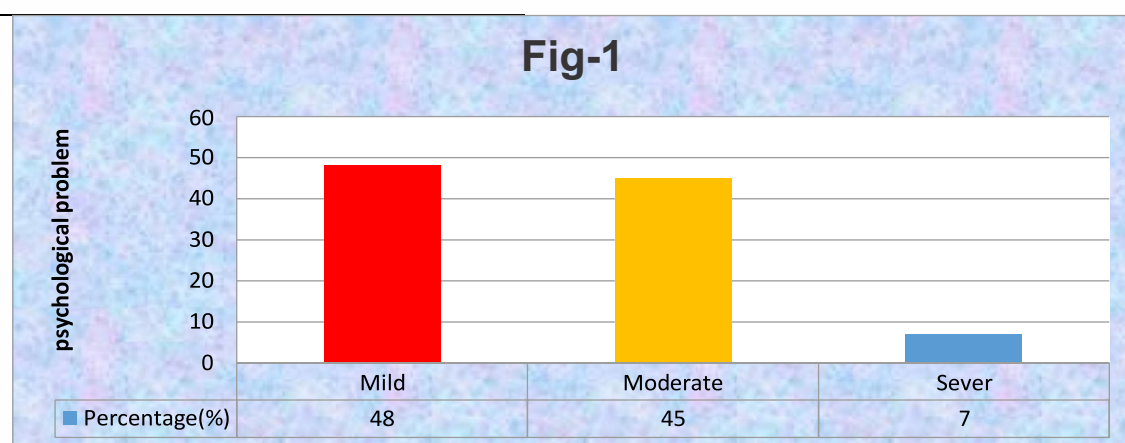


Figure1. level of psychological problems of spouse of mentally ill patient

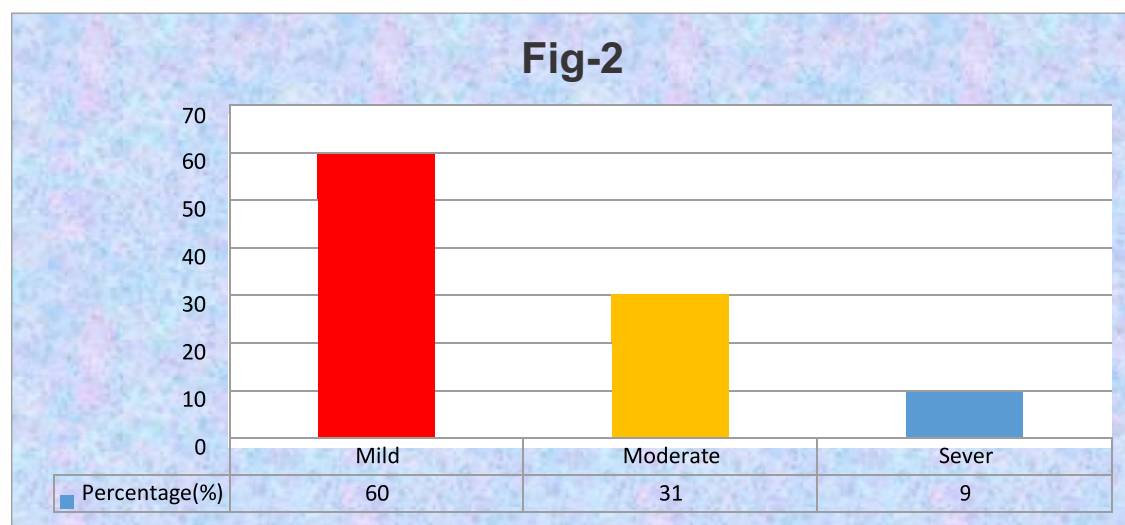


Figure- 2level of social problems of spouse of mentally ill patient.

Locality	2.893	2	NS	.845	2	NS
Monthly income	5.175	6	NS	1.685	6	NS
Type of family	7.316	2	SIG	.211	2	NS
Nuclear family	9.320	6	NS	5.658	6	NS
Occupation.	4.910	6	NS	10.572 ^a	6	NS
Years of marriage	6.733	6	NS	13.065	6	Sig

Discussion

The results of the study indicate that spouses of mentally ill patients attending the Outpatient Department (OPD) in the selected setting in Jaipur face significant psychological and social problems.

In present study, spouses of mentally ill patients reported experiencing psychological problems, with a mean score of 42.04 out of 90. This finding aligns with previous research that has consistently shown that caregivers of mentally ill individuals are at an increased risk of experiencing psychological distress, such as stress, anxiety, and depression. In our study finding also revealed that spouses of mentally ill patients faced social problems, with a mean score of 39.42 out of 90. This finding is consistent with previous research that has identified social challenges faced by caregivers, including social isolation, strain in relationships, and disruptions in social activities and networks. These difficulties can arise due to the increased care giving responsibilities and the stigma associated with mental illness.

Conclusions

The present study provides valuable insights into the psychological and social problems experienced by spouses of mentally ill patients attending the OPD in the selected setting in Jaipur. The findings highlight the need for targeted interventions and support services to address the specific needs of these individuals. By recognizing and addressing the challenges faced by spouses, healthcare professionals can contribute to improving the overall well-being of both the mentally ill patients and their caregivers.

References

1. Chadda RK. Caring for the family caregivers of persons with mental illness. *Indian J Psychiatry*. 2014;56(3):221–7.
2. Srivastava A. Marriage as a perceived panacea to mental illness in India: Reality check. *Indian J Psychiatry*. 2013 Jan;55(Suppl 2):S239–42.
3. Wainberg ML, Scorza P, Shultz JM, Helpman L, Mootz JJ, Johnson KA, et al. Challenges and Opportunities in Global Mental Health: a Research-to-Practice Perspective. *Curr Psychiatry Rep*. 2017 May;19(5):28.
4. Wittenberg E, Saada A, Prosser LA. How illness affects family members: a qualitative interview survey. *The patient*. 2013 Dec;6(4):10.1007/s40271-013-0030–3.
5. Sharma N, Chakrabarti S, Grover S. Gender differences in caregiving among family - caregivers of people with mental illnesses. *World J Psychiatry*. 2016 Mar 22;6(1):7–17.
6. Schulz R, Sherwood PR. Physical and Mental Health Effects of Family Caregiving. *Am J Nurs*. 2008 Sep;108(9 Suppl):23–7.