Predictor factors of perceived health in family caregivers of people diagnosed with mild or moderate Alzheimer?s disease

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Caring for a person diagnosed with Alzheimer?s disease has a negative impact on family caregivers? psychological health. This study examined the factors related to ?perceived health? and ?presence of new-onset mental health problems? in family caregivers of people diagnosed with mild and moderate Alzheimer?s disease. A cross-sectional observational study carried out in Almeria?s Healthcare District (Spain). A total of 255 family caregivers (42.4% cared for people with mild Alzheimer?s disease and 57.6% cared for people with moderate Alzheimer?s disease) participated in the study from January to December 2015. Mainly, caregivers were women (81.5% in the mild Alzheimer?s disease group and 88.4% in the moderate Alzheimer?s disease group), and their average age was 56.54 years (standard deviation (SD) = 13.13) and 54.47 years (SD = 11.71), respectively. Around 47% of the caregivers had been caring for the person with Alzheimer?s between two and five years. The Goldberg General Health Questionnaire was used to measure perceived health and the presence of new-onset mental health problems. An exploratory descriptive analysis and a multivariate logistic regression analysis were conducted. For caregivers of people with mild Alzheimer?s disease, ?perceived health? was related to ?perceived social support? (r = 0.21; p = 0.028), ?person?s level of dependency? (r = 0.24, p = 0.05), ?severity of the person?s neuropsychiatric symptoms? (r = 0.22; p = 0.05), and ?caregiver?s emotional distress in response to the person?s neuropsychiatric symptoms? (r = 0.22; p = 0.05). For caregivers of people with moderate Alzheimer?s disease, ?perceived health? was related to ?perceived social support? (r =
The presence of neuropsychiatric symptoms was associated with increased risk of mental health problems in caregivers. Specifically, the presence of neuropsychiatric symptoms was associated with an increase in the risk of mental health problems in caregivers (odds ratio = 2.7, 95% CI = 1.6-4.5, p < 0.01). Similarly, the severity of neuropsychiatric symptoms was associated with increased risk of mental health problems in caregivers (odds ratio = 3.2, 95% CI = 2.0-5.0, p < 0.01). The presence of caregiver distress in response to the person's neuropsychiatric symptoms was also associated with increased risk of mental health problems in caregivers (odds ratio = 2.9, 95% CI = 1.7-5.0, p < 0.01).

In caregivers of people with mild Alzheimer's disease, the incidence of new-onset mental health problems was 46.3% (n = 50). Among caregivers of people with moderate Alzheimer's disease, the incidence was 61.9% (n = 91). When people are diagnosed with mild Alzheimer's disease, intervention programs for caregivers should aim to regulate emotions and promote positive coping strategies. When people are diagnosed with moderate Alzheimer's disease, intervention programs for caregivers must allow them to adapt to caregiving demands that arise with the progression of Alzheimer's disease. © 2019 by the authors. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland.
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