

ABSTRACT

Background: Substance dependence is one of the greatest evils existing in the society. It is regarded as a family disease as it impacts every member in the family. The victims of substance use disorders are not merely the persons who misuse the psychoactive substances, but also the family members and the society. Most of the time, the adverse consequences of addiction are bore by the significant others who take care of the substance dependent. With the early initiation and habituation of the substances during early adolescence, the responsibility and burden of caregiving befalls on the parents of substance dependents. Mothers who become the primary caregivers are found to develop multiple psycho-social issues, as they themselves are going through a headstrong period of menopause and related changes. Appreciating the overall condition of mothers and acknowledging their struggles in living with the substance dependent, helps in empowering the mothers and incorporating them as partners in the treatment of substance dependence. The current study is intended to understand the psychosocial aspects of mothers and to explore their challenges.

Method: The research methodology adopted in this study is descriptive, using both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection. The sampling design was purposive sampling and the sample size was 72. The researcher used self-administered rating scales such as Multidimensional Scale for Perceived Social Support (Zimet et. al., 1988), Burden Scale for Family Caregivers (Grasel, Chiu & Oliver, 1999), Beck's Depression Inventory (1961) and COPE Inventory (1989). In-depth interviews were done with selected respondents to collect qualitative information. The quantitative data were analyzed with simple statistical methods and qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis.

Results: The most of the mothers were passing through the menopausal changes, physically, mentally and socially. They were caregiving their son with substance dependence for more than two years. Majority of the mothers had to undergo drastic shift in their occupational and financial status due to caregiving. Prevalence of psychological disorders like PTSD, anxiety, panic attack and depression was very high among the mothers. Mothers received poor social support from their husbands, family members and from friends. They experienced high degree of burden and had to face criticism from other members of the family. They underwent threats and assaults from their substance dependent son and his affiliates. Mothers had severe setbacks in social and financial status. Mental health was also profoundly affected by the son's substance dependence. A huge majority of the mothers stated that they are ready to support their sons overcoming the resistance from other members, provided the son was ready to quit psychoactive substances.

Conclusion: The study was able to bring forth the struggles and challenges of the mothers of young adults with multiple substance dependence. The study explores deeply the emotions, attitudes and behaviors of mothers with regard to themselves and with their substance dependent son. Treatment of substance use disorders cannot be complete without addressing the psychosocial problems of the mothers, as they play an ineffable role in prevention of the relapse. Implications and suggestions of the study are detailed in the final chapter.