A Survey on Caregiving Burden and Social Support in Cancer Patient Families Referred to Imam Khomeini Hospital of Ardabil, 2017

Background & objective: Cancer is a life-threatening disease with high mortality and the wide symptoms and complications of this chronic disease and its therapeutic methods increase the need for care in these patients. Their families have the most responsibility to take care of their patients, also they face major problems during the care process. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the caregiving burden and social support in cancer patient families.

Methods: In this cross-sectional study, 190 family members of cancer patients who were introduced as the main caregiver of patient by him/her were selected through convenient sampling method. Data were collected using socio-demographic, Zarit Burden Interview and Medical Outcomes Study Social Support Survey questionnaires.

Results: The mean age of caregivers was 41.07±13.98 and they were mostly female, married and housewives. The mean caregiving burden in the caregiver was 43.95±17.48 which indicates moderate to severe burden. The average social support in the caregiver was 60.25±23.81% which shows above the average level of social support. A statistically significant negative relationship was observed between caregiving burden and social support in cancer patient families. Also all aspects of social support were correlated with each other and the whole set.

Conclusion: Considering the global spread of cancer, the importance of care provided by families increases too. The caregiving burden in family caregivers is due to care and is affected by several factors. Therefore, it is essential to develop strategies for providing caregivers needs and reducing the cost of care. Social support as a common factor among this study and other studies can play a significant role in reducing caregiving burden.

Keywords: Caregiving Burden, Social Support, Cancer, Family