BURDEN AND DEPRESSION OF CAREGIVERS OF ELDERLY

Gomez, Maria¹; Ramos, Cláudia²; Costa, Inês²; Campelo, Joana²
1 - Psychiatric doctor. HJJF, ULSBA. 2 – Residents of Family Medicine, ULSBA

ULSBA
Unidade Local de Saúde
do Baixo Alentejo, EPE

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study was to **describe the sociodemographic characteristics of informal caregivers** and verify if there is a **relation between the levels of burden and mood state of the caregivers**.

Caregiver burden may result from providing care for patients with chronic illness. The most frequent caregivers are family³. They are exposed to high levels of physical and psychological pressure.

METHODS

The study was conducted with **caregivers of elderly patients (>65yrs)** who attended to the **geriatric medical appointment** on the Psychiatry department **for 2 months**. All adult caregivers, who agreed to participate voluntarily, were selected to filling out a sociodemographic questionnaire, the **Hamilton Depression Scale** and the **Zarit Burden Interview**.

RESULTS

Sociodemographic characteristics of caregivers	Results (n=34 questionnaires)
Gender	female (82%)
Age (years)	22 to 85 ($\bar{x}$ 63)
Marital status	married (70%)
Education	low education (<9 th grade, 82%)
Professional situation	retired (50%) full-time worker (32%)
Kinship	patients' spouse (56%) daughter/son (32%)
Full-time caregiver	71% (n=24)

Tab. 1: Sociodemographic characteristics of caregivers

65% of the caregivers presented **some degree of burden** and **68%** signs of **depression**. Between the **full-time caregivers**, **79%** revealed the **presence of burden** and **75%** signs of **depression**. The **correlation coefficient** between the Zarit scale score and the Hamilton scale score was **0.79**, which shows a **positive correlation between the two scales**.

Zarit results

Without burden
Mild burden
Severe burden

Hamilton results

Normal
Mild Depression
Moderate Depression
Severe Depression
Very Severe Depression

Fig. 1: Hamilton Depression Scale and Zarit Burden Interview results

Fig. 2: Correlation between Hamilton Depression Scale and Zarit Burden Interview

CONCLUSION

The **levels of burden** and the signs of **depression** found in the sample were **significantly high** and revealed a strong association between them. Being a full-time caregiver is an important risk factor. **Family doctors must pay special attention to these informal caregivers, as they are at high risk for mental distress, anxiety and depression.**