

Caregiver burden and life satisfaction one year post stroke

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INTRODUCTION

Changes in the performance of occupations in everyday life afflict not only the person with stroke but their caregiver as well. Caregivers often need to assist with ADL activities and may run the risk for caregiver burn-out and decreased life satisfaction. The person with stroke shares with their caregiver a unique relationship and is therefore important to study them as a dyad. Dyads have been studied regarding joint life satisfaction showing significant relations to their functioning in everyday life. Few studies have explored the joint life satisfaction after stroke and none in relationship to the perceived level of caregiver burden.

OBJECTIVES

The aim of this study was to investigate the life satisfaction of the caregiver and the joint life satisfaction of the dyad (caregiver and person with stroke), in relationship to the perceived level of caregiver burden and the level of functioning one year after stroke onset.

METHODS

This prospective study involved all persons with stroke admitted to a major stroke-unit in central Sweden during one year and that had identified a caregiver. Life satisfaction of the dyad was determined by LiSat-11 and the caregivers were administered the Caregiver Burden Scale one year post stroke. The Barthel Index was used to determine level of functioning of the persons with stroke.

RESULTS

This study consisted of 109 dyads. Of the caregivers, 70% were women and the average age was 65.6 years (19-84). Information available for 79 dyads showed that joint life satisfaction was high for 40%, low for 26%, and there was a discrepancy for 33%. Only five caregivers had a high level of caregiver burden and the greater majority (59%) had a low level of burden, whereas 37% had a medium level. Thirty percent of the persons with stroke were independent (BI>95).

CONCLUSION

A comparatively larger percentage of the dyads indicated a low level of life satisfaction compared with the perceived level of caregiver burden. Further results will be discussed in relation to practical implications for the field.

CONTRIBUTION TO THE PRACTICE OF OT

This study contributes knowledge regarding OT clients as dyads to facilitate effective OT interventions.