A Study on the Family Burden of Chronically Ill Patient at Hospital

Abstract

The concept of the family burden for helping patients in the hospital as well as in the home setting has been raised as a nursing issue recently. Since the Korean family relationship is very unique and strong in character, the family members usually stay with the patients when they are hospitalized. Due to the heavy duty of the family member to help the patient, they easily faced with the dilemma to handle the burden which they perceived.

For the total care of the hospitalized patient, the clinical nurse should consider and/or predict the family burden of the patient. Therefore, this study aims to figure out the amount of caregiver's burden and to find out several factors related to the family burden in the context of the holistic care of the hospitalized chronic patients.

The specific objectives of this study are:
1) To identify the amount of burden perceived by family caregivers,
2) To identify the relationships between the family caregiver's burden and socioeconomic state, the patient's disease character, and patient's ADL dependency.
3) To identify the relationships between the family caregiver's burden and their caring activities.

Data were collected for 3 months from July 6, to September 26, 1992, using 3 instruments at the neurology and the internal medicine nursing units of one university hospital in Seoul.

The sample size was 75 caregivers whose family members were admitted due to chronic illness during the study period.

The instruments used for this research were caregiver's burden inventory, caring activity checklist of family caregiver, patient's ADL dependency checklist.

The collected data were analyzed with percentage, oneway ANOVA, Pearson's Correlation, and Cronbach's z.

The obtained results were as follows:
1) The average score of the perceived burden of the family caregiver was 62.72 which is higher than the mode score of the instrument.

The average score of objective burden is higher than the mode score of the instrument and the score of subjective burden is lower than the mode score of the instrument.

*Head Nurse, Inservice Education Part, Nursing Service Department, Seoul National University Hospital.

**Professor, College of Nursing, Seoul National University.
2) The degree of family burden was significantly related to the age of family caregiver and the duration of caregiver’s stay in hospital.
3) The characteristics of the patient’s illness such as severity of disease and patient’s hospitalization day were related to the family caregiver’s burden.
4) Patient’s ADL dependency was not related to the family caregiver’s burden significantly.
5) Total amount of family caregiver’s helping activities spent for 3 days was 6 hours and 50 minutes per day and the frequency of their helping activities was about 34 per day. Among their helping activities, nurse-aid activity was negatively correlated with the family burden and the errand or treating the visitors were positively correlated with the family burden. The relationship between the caregiver’s activity of the family and the family caregiver burden was not proved significant statistically.

In the conclusion, as this study revealed that the burden of the family caregiver was high in degree, the related variables to the family burden such as caregiver’s age, duration of caregiver’s stay in hospital, disease characteristics, and the length of hospitalization of the patient should be considered by the nurses who are responsible to care of the hospitalized chronic patients on the context of the holistic nursing care.

**Key words:** Family Burden, Chronic Illness

1. 서 론

1. 연구의 필요성

체계론적 관점에서 볼 때 개인은 가족의 일원으로서 역동적인 관계를 갖기 때문에 한 개인의 질병은 모든 가족 구성원에게 영향을 미친다. 가족의 일원이 질병을 알게되면 가족의 역할과 기능이 전환되어 가장의 일상적인 평형상태가 깨어지고 건강과 불안이 초래되며, 가족원들간은 환자를 돌보는 과정에서 신체적, 정신적, 경제적 활동에 지장이 초래될 수 있다(고, 1979; 고, 1982; 최, 1982; Bishop 등, 1986; Printz-Fedderson, 1990; Robinson, 1986).

다구나 우리나라의 가족관계와 의료 환경의 특성으로 입원시 가족의 입상이 일상화되어 있어서, 가족원은 비전문적 범위내에서 환자를 돌보면서(최, 1975), 입원기간 동안 환자를 위해서 해야할 일을 앞에 둔다고 한다(김, 1988). 간호사들은 질병을 얻는 환자뿐만 아니라 그 가족의 반응에 환자의 치료와 회복에도 직접적인 영향을 미친다는 것을 인식해야 한다.

그리므로 최근에는 환자 자문에 대한 연구뿐만 아니라 환자가족에 대한 연구 또한 관심의 대상이 되고 있다.


가족의 일원이 환자로 입원하게되면 다른 가