

Abstract

This paper is based on a study carried out in Hong Kong and investigates psychosocial factors associated with stress and mental health functioning of caregivers of Chinese elderly patients. A total of 195 caregivers were interviewed in an outpatient geriatric clinic. This study further confirms that a high level of caregiver burden negatively contributes to psychological distress. Results showed that caregivers who were spouses, children, grandchildren, or in-laws of the elderly patients experienced a similar level of caregiver strain. Female caregivers tended to experience more strain and poorer mental health than male caregivers. Findings of hierarchical regression analyses indicated that a high level of caregiver strain was best predicted by caregivers' frequent use of avoidance to cope with stresses, lack of a sense of self-mastery, and a high level of educational attainment. Caregivers' negative mental health functioning was best predicted by a high level of caregiver strain, reliance on avoidance and social support in coping with stresses. Contrary to hypotheses, caregivers' sense of filial piety neither relate to the level of caregiver strain nor mental health functioning in this sample.