

Overburden and Mourning in the Family Members of People in Palliative Situation

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Abstract:

Grief is a complex reaction including multiple dimensions which may result in pathological grief. Those dimensions include degree of kinship and the overburdening of the family members who are experiencing grief. To determine the prevalence of pathological grief in the family members of people in palliative situation and ascertain whether the overburdening affect the grief process.

Descriptive study, carried out on a sample of family members of patients under palliative care. Using the Context of Mourning Scale, the Caregiver Burden Scale and the Inventory of Complicated Grief.

Out of the 75 participants, 69.3% were females, with an average age of 41.59 years old. In the overall sample, 48.0% of the participants in mourning lost a direct family member and 74.7% presented overburdening. 34 had been in mourning for at least 6 months, having obtained a score over 30 on the Inventory of Complicated Grief, which translates as the experience of pathological grief. Out of these, 44.2% were women and 47.8% were men. Among participants experiencing pathological grief, 61.1% had lost a direct family member and 53.6% presented overburdening.

Findings reveal the need to monitor the factors for vulnerability in grief, in order to mobilize the required resources to promote a healthy experiencing of that grief. Considering the high prevalence of pathological grief and its variability regarding the family member's overburden, we suggest new lines of investigation to support a better fitting and more effective psychotherapeutic intervention in grief management.

Keywords:

Palliative Care, Family Members, Grief, Overburden.