

## **PP 15 Economic and emotional costs of schizophrenia on primary caregivers**

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**INTRODUCTION:** Schizophrenia is a relatively common, major, chronic, universal mental illness, which affects around one percent of any given population. The illness runs a fluctuating course and as such the patients may need in patient admissions and long term follow-up. As such, it demands the continuous involvement of caregivers in its course. In turn, caregivers who provide care and support to these patients may experience severe burden.

**OBJECTIVES:** The study was designed to assess the economic and emotional costs of Schizophrenia among primary caregivers of patients, attending the psychiatric clinic, Teaching Hospital, Jaffna.

**METHODS:** A cross sectional descriptive study was conducted among 101 primary caregivers, selected by simple random sampling method, between the months of May and July 2013. The data were collected by interviewer administered, semi-structured questionnaire.

**RESULTS:** The study revealed that the mean direct cost of the previous month for medication was Rs 724.00, while it was Rs 335.00 for investigations and Rs 227.00 for transport. The mean indirect cost, due to leave or unemployment of the primary caregivers was found to be Rs 1880.00 while it was Rs 3357.00 due to lack of efficiency in their work. The mean emotional burden score was found to be 57.05 (SD: 9.397). It was found that older age group experienced lower burden in caring their spouses, while the unemployed caregivers experienced greater burden on several burden factors. On the other hand, persons who have been caring for longer period showed relatively lower burden score in the patient factor.

**CONCLUSION:** The study brings out an important message that the health care system needs to focus on specific interventions in view of reducing the burden of caregivers of people with chronic mental illnesses and find ways to provide economic support for at least selected group of people.