**Economic burden and quality of life of caregivers of schizophrenic patients in psychiatric hospitals in Ghana.**

Yaw N. Opoku-Boateng1, Irene A. Kretchy2, Justice Nonvignon1

1Department of Health Policy, Planning & Management, School of Public Health, College of Health Sciences, University of Ghana, Legon, Ghana

2Department of Pharmacy Practice and Clinical Pharmacy, School of Pharmacy, College of Health Sciences, University of Ghana, Legon, Ghana

Presenting authors email: nanabee254@hotmail.com ; ynopoku-boateng@st.ug.edu.gh

**Background**

Caregiving plays an important role in the management of severe mental health disabilities like schizophrenia. In many low - income settings where formal (or paid) caregiving is not prevalent, the economic and psychological burden borne by family members who play these roles often go unnoticed. . In the case of Ghana, where the Mental Health Act (2012) provides for de-institutionalization of mental health care, it is important to highlight the (especially economic and psychological) burden borne by family members in caring for people with severe mental health disabilities. There is paucity of studies on the burden of family caregiving for severe disabilities, and the current research fills this gap. The objective of the current study, therefore, is to estimate the economic burden and assess the quality of life of schizophrenia on family caregivers in Ghana.

**Method**

A cost analytic approach (Cost of illness) was used in estimating the economic burden and WHOQOL-BREF was employed to determine the quality of life. The primary source of data for this study included caregivers of patients who were diagnosed with schizophrenia at least six months prior to the study and who present to any of the three psychiatric hospitals in Ghana

Economic burden was categorized direct costs (including medical and non-medical costs of seeking care), indirect costs (productivity losses to caregivers) and intangible costs (non-monetary costs such as stigma, pain, etc.). Direct costs were estimated using the direct economic costs of seeking care (e.g. medicines, consultations, travel, etc.). Indirect costs were estimated as the time (in hours) of productive time lost to caregiving multiplied by the daily wage. Intangible costs assessed using the Zarit Burden Interview.

Quality of life was assessed using the WHO Quality of Life tool (WHOQOL), which has four (4) domains namely, physical health, Psychological, Social relationships and Environment.

**Expected results**

It is expected that the results of the study will highlight the burden that caregiving for schizophrenic patients place on the quality of life and the economic structure. This study is ongoing and will be completed soon to enable us present final results at the conference of family caregivers.

**Key terms:** Economic burden, quality of life, caregiving, schizophrenia, Ghana

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