

Abstract

The Expressed Emotion (EE) as a construct has been studied since last four decades in the field of clinical psychology around the world and found to be a robust predictor of relapse in patients with schizophrenia. However no such study has been conducted so far in Pakistan which could focus on the relationship of EE in caregivers and psychiatric relapse in patients with schizophrenia. The present study is a pioneering attempt in this regard. This research was aimed at studying the effects of high-EE in relatives on psychiatric relapse of patients with schizophrenia. For accomplishing this task data were gathered from key caregivers ($N= 101$) of inpatients with schizophrenia. The status of EE of caregivers was assessed through the Camberwell Family Interview (CFI) at the time of patients' admission at mental health facility and relapse rates were assessed for nine months period after patients' discharge from the hospital. Two caregivers from each household were rated through CFI. For analyzing relapse rates one caregiver with higher scores on EE from each household was selected. It was hypothesized that patients living with high-EE will relapse more frequently than those living with low-EE. Results of Binary Logistic Regression analysis revealed that high-EE in caregivers is a strong predictor of relapse in patients with schizophrenia within nine months period of follow-up. Critical comments (CCs) and Hostility (H), two components of EE, were found significantly related with relapse in patients with schizophrenia. Emotional Over-Involvement (EOI), another EE component, failed to predict relapse in patients.

In addition to the relationship between EE and relapse, this study also looked at the effects of high-EE and Burden of Care (BOC) on the health of caregivers of patients with schizophrenia.

The burden in caregivers was assessed through Burden Assessment Scale (BAS), and health of the caregivers was measured through General Health Questionnaire-12 (GHQ-12), Rand-Modified (Rand-M) and Physical Health Checklist (PHC). The results showed that those caregivers who exhibited high-EE experienced poorer health at base line and their health also deteriorated more after a period of nine months. Regardless of high- or low-EE, health of the caregivers deteriorated over time. Results of Pearson Product-Moment Correlation revealed that there is a positive correlation between EOI, component of high-EE, BOC and three health measures. After discovering positive relationship between these variables three separate Regression Analyses were performed with health as a dependent variable, three components of high-EE (CCs, H, & EOI) as independent variables and BOC as a covariate. Results disclosed BOC would likely to be a mediator between EOI and poor health of caregivers. A path analysis was performed for verifying the mediational role of BOC between EOI and health of caregivers. Results of path analysis confirmed this relationship. The findings of this research are consistent with many previous studies in indicating that EE is a predictor of relapse in patients with schizophrenia. However, the results suggest that H and CCs are predictors of relapse in patients while EOI exerts a negative impact on caregivers' own health by increasing their burden of care. The findings of this work have high implications for clinicians, mental health professionals and researchers and can be used to initiate psycho-education workshops and family interventions to reduce EE in family dynamics to improve the health of both caregivers and patients.