

Effect of Psycho-Education on Selected Personality Correlates among Primary Caregivers of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders: An Exploratory Investigation

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Abstract

Caregiver burden appears to be a key personality correlate among primary caregivers of children with autism spectrum disorders (ASD). However, there is much scarcity of studies in relation to caregivers of developmental disabilities. The present study involved 26 primary caregivers (in the form of parents) of children with autism. It was based on pretest-posttest design to verify the efficacy of a psycho-education tool (booklet) that was developed on the basis of data collected from personal interview conducted with the primary care-givers. They were assessed to determine the effect of psycho-education on perceived stress, locus of control and different coping strategies of the primary caregivers. The psycho-education tool was prepared to make them equipped to handle the stress of dealing with an offspring with developmental disability. Statistics in the form of descriptive analysis (Mean, Standard deviations) and inferential analysis (Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test) revealed significant difference between pre- and post-intervention condition with respect to parental stress, with its lower loading in the post-intervention situation. Significantly increased internal locus of control and problem-focused coping along with acceptance and redefinition in the post-intervention situation was also observed. Further, hopelessness showed a decline in the post-intervention situation, thereby indicating that psycho-education did have an impact on the selected personality dimensions of caregivers of children with autism. Psycho-education was found to serve as an important tool to aid the primary care-givers to be equipped psychologically, thereby getting empowered with coping resources to overcome their stress consequently. Implications along therapeutic avenues have been discussed.

Key words: Autism spectrum disorder, psycho-education, caregiver empowerment