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Is there any association between spirituality, depression and socio-economic status among caregivers of patients with Alzheimer's disease?

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Statement of the Problem: Patients with Alzheimer's disease may require persistent care. This may have a large impact on the caregivers' quality of life and predisposes them to psychological distress. Spirituality, however, may act as a buffer and enhance their adaptability with stressful conditions. This study aimed to evaluate the associations between socio-economic status, spirituality and symptoms of depression in a sample of caregivers of patients with Alzheimer's disease.

Methodology & Theoretical Orientation: In this cross-sectional study, 209 outpatients with moderate Alzheimer's disease (using DSM-IV criteria and MMSE test) and their caregivers were selected. Patients' and caregivers' demographic and socio-economic data were recorded. The Spiritual Intelligence Questionnaire and Hospital Anxiety-Depression Scale were completed by caregivers.

Findings: The prevalence of high depressive symptoms was 45%. Economic status of caregivers had relationship with spirituality, as the poor group had more spirituality than the non-poor. There was no association between gender and spirituality dimensions. High spirituality was correlated with low depressive symptoms.

Conclusion & Significance: Symptoms of depression are highly prevalent in Alzheimer caregivers and are associated with spirituality. Spirituality itself may be a function of socio-economic status. Spirituality based interventions, particularly among those with higher socio-economic status maybe a useful strategy to promote mental health and quality of life of caregivers. More descriptive and interventional studies are required before adding the spiritual counseling to routine helping programs for caregivers.

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Parameters of physical appearance as an indicator of learned optimism

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The present study is aimed at the parameters of physical appearance and their relation to Learned Optimism. In physical appearance, the factors considered for research are facial expression, body language and clothing. Learned optimism can be described as a conscious effort to enhance positive self- talk to reinforce self -confidence and assure positivity. The purpose of the study is to investigate a sample of 30 young adults between the ages of 18-35 years currently either employed or studying in United Arab Emirates-Dubai for understanding their perspectives on parameters of physical appearance and further their opinions on these being indicators of learned optimism. The methodology for collecting data is focus group interview, which was further qualitatively analyzed by thematic analysis. The researchers had two hypotheses i.e. (a) Parameters of Physical appearance are indicators of Learned Optimism (b) Optimism can be imbibed, practiced and learned. The results clearly indicated that parameters of physical appearance are important resource for demonstrating optimism & that they share a significant relationship with learned optimism in current times. The research also implies a definite need for training individuals in optimism through making radical changes in their physical appearance.

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