

Quality of life and its associated factors among caregivers of paediatric patients with epilepsy at the Lady Ridgeway Hospital for Children, Colombo.

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Introduction - Epilepsy is a chronic neurological disorder that impacts both patients and their caregivers. While research has explored the factors influencing the quality of life of individuals with epilepsy and their caregivers, no studies have specifically examined caregivers' QOL in Sri Lanka. The objective of the study is to determine the quality of life and its associated factors among caregivers of paediatric patients with epilepsy at the Lady Ridgeway Hospital for Children, Colombo.

Materials and Methods – A hospital-based descriptive cross-sectional study was carried among 200 primary caregivers of paediatric epileptic patients with a confirmed diagnosis for more than 6 months who are being managed at the paediatric neurology clinic of the Lady Ridgeway Hospital for Children. Data was collected using a self-administered questionnaire. Associations were tested using chi-square test at $p < 0.05$ significance level.

Results – According to the present study, 88.5% ($n=177$) of caregivers experienced a good quality of life, whereas 11.5% ($n=23$) of caregivers experienced a poor quality of life. Among the factors assessed, the existence of the caregiver's chronic illnesses ($p=0.029$), the caregiver marital status ($p=0.008$), the side effects of anti-epileptic drugs ($p=0.030$), and the monthly earnings for the family ($p=0.010$) showed a significant association with the quality of life of the caregiver. An association that was not important, but which got our attention was between the quality of life of the caregiver and the amount of interest and concern the caregiver gets when taking care of the child ($p=0.056$).

Discussion – The caregiver's history of long-term illnesses, the caregiver marital status, the adverse consequences of anti-epileptic medications, and the monthly family income were significantly associated with the quality of life of the caregivers of paediatric patients with epilepsy, and hence focus should be directed to those areas when managing such patients.