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Strain and psychological distress among informal supporters of reflex sympathetic dystrophy patients.

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Abstract

PURPOSE:

A study to investigate strain and psychiatric morbidity in informal caregivers of patients with reflex sympathetic dystrophy (RSD).

METHOD:

Fifty one caregivers of RSD patients in the community, identified from a support group in Leeds or a conference in Eastbourne completed standardized questionnaire measures of strain, mood, adjustment, positive and negative affectivity and social support.

RESULTS:

Fifty seven percent of caregivers experienced significant strain and 53% had poor mood. Adjusting for age and gender, partial correlations showed that the experience of strain in caregivers was associated with poor mood, poor psychological adjustment to the patient's illness, high levels of negative affectivity, increased handicap and disability of the patient.

CONCLUSIONS:

A high proportion of caregivers of RSD patients experience poor mood and significant levels of strain. Caregivers who are poorly adjusted to the illness experience the most strain. These findings suggest a need for intervention to alleviate the negative impacts of caregiving and facilitate adjustment.