

CHAPTER - IX

SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION

9.0 INTRODUCTION

Psychoeducation has become an indispensable adjunctive intervention in the field of mental health. There are several evidences which have shown the effectiveness of psychoeducational intervention. Optimal care to individuals with chronic debilitating mental illness is multidimensional in nature and should incorporate all kinds of therapeutic services to address every aspects of illness. The psychoeducational model has potential to empower caregivers with knowledge and basic skills, which in turn better enables them to cope with the client's symptomatic behaviour as well as the daily frustrations and burdens of caring for someone diagnosed with schizophrenia.

9.1 IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study opted shorter duration of psychoeducational intervention. The positive results of the study clearly indicated that the caregivers can be educated to understand more clearly what the patient is experiencing, how to respond to their need and to diminish unrealistic expectations about their ill relative's illness. It is important to develop a structured psychoeducational package for the caregivers for other categories of mental illness at different levels like psychiatric hospitals and at community level. Psychiatric social work is a profession, which predominantly work for persons with mental illness and their caregivers. So Psychiatric Social Workers need to provide group education as well as incorporate psychoeducation to routine treatment care. They should follow the dynamics involved in the group work process, a method of social work, so that interventions would be more effective. Psychoeducation and support for caregivers with mentally ill people is lacking in India. Provision of psychoeducation will definitely address this service gap.

9.2 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study has included only before and after without control design without any long term follow up. Further follow up to assess the impact of the training was not carried out. The caregivers covered in the study catered mostly to the lower socio- economic section of the society.

9.3 SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The psychoeducational intervention helps to enhance knowledge about illness and alter the expressed emotions of caregivers. Research can be undertaken in the area of group psychoeducation in order to develop a standardized intervention package for caregivers of persons with schizophrenia and also needed to identify the barriers in implementing psychoeducation. Further research in this area would result in the extension of group psychoeducation along with routine out patient care. Longitudinal studies can be carried out to trace the factors relating to psychoeducation and also to assess the effect of psychoeducational intervention on the improvement of patients' social and occupational functioning. More research is needed to examine how psychoeducational interventions for caregivers impact the lives of patients, their outcomes and in other important areas of functioning beyond relapse and symptomatic improvement. Such studies will help make caregivers' psychoeducation more relevant to the concerns of patients and their families, and enhance the dissemination of psychoeducational interventions. Research is needed to identify which interventions are most likely to be effective for particular families.

There is an urgent need to provide the mental health sector with evidence of effective ways to implement the research evidence for caregivers' involvement in mental health care. Psychoeducational interventions have a sound evidence base, can enhance recovery in people living with mental illness and improve the lives of their caregivers and support people. Caregivers interventions are a vital service and efforts must be made to make these programs more available and accessible along with routine pharmacotherapy.

Despite strong research support the implementation of psychoeducational intervention in clinical practice has been very limited. This study confirms that caregivers' psychoeducation helps them in acquisition of knowledge about schizophrenia as well as alter their EE. Psychoeducational interventions are a vital service and efforts must be made to make these interventions more available and accessible in the clinical practice.

9.4 CONCLUSION

Caring for a person with schizophrenia is highly challenging and it might result in a negative emotional atmosphere in the patient's family. The emotional atmosphere means the quality of caregiver's EE which will influence patient's recovery. Hence the psychoeducation along with ongoing pharmacotherapy is very effective in the treatment of schizophrenia.

Though over years management of schizophrenia has evolved but challenge still exists. Even today due to lack of awareness about the illness and associated stigma, the caregivers delay in bringing their patients for treatment. In addition compliance is the very big challenge in medical treatment there by increasing the recurrence of relapse and worsening the long term social and functional outcome affecting the recovery. Medical adherence and social functioning are very good predictions of managing improvement. With recent advances treatment goals should shift from controlling symptoms to recovery and to social re-integration.

Caregivers of persons with schizophrenia experience disempowerment and helplessness because of unique stressors in their everyday life, mainly derived from the positive and negative symptoms of the illness (Bauml, et al., 2006). The present study specifically focused on caregivers psychoeducation along with routine out patient treatment to improve knowledge about illness and to alter expressed emotions. It was conducted for the lower socio-economic background caregivers who attended Institute of Mental Health, Chennai, for their ill relatives' treatment. The method of providing psychoeducation depends wholly on the available resources that is highly practical to implement and not expensive.

The positive findings is an independent evidence based practice in Psychiatric Social Work. Psychoeducation is one of the current therapeutic interventional approaches to empower caregivers by enhancing their knowledge about Schizophrenia, accept the illness and manage related problems effectively with realistic expectations. Thus the findings of the present study highlighted the expanding horizons of psychoeducation in the growing field of mental health. The Psychiatric Social Work professionals need to get involved in planning, organizing and evaluating different components of psychoeducation at institution, semi-institution and non-institutional levels. In this regard, it is important on the part of the mental health profession to incorporate the caregivers in out-patient and in-patient psychiatric hospital settings as well as community based treatment settings. Present study shows that it is feasible to implement cost effective interventions a flexible model in psychiatric hospitals which have a potentially important contribution in the evidence of empowering caregivers in the mental health field. Most caregivers seemed to prefer this type of educational intervention, which had better attendance, participation as it was a flexible model conducted once in two weeks when they come to collect drugs for their ill relatives. Informal educational sessions with periodic ‘across-the-table’ reinforces may be more effective and practical in the Indian setting (**Thara, 2005**) that proved to maintain and empower caregivers of persons with schizophrenia.

*“It is not enough that we do our best
Sometimes we have to do what is required.”*

- Sir Winston Churchill