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## The Invisible Burden: A Thematic Review on Stress and Support for Women Caregivers of Individuals with Disabilities

NFaridah ARoslan 1\* , Nasibah Azmee 2, Anie Farhana Ngimron1, WNajwa WZohdi 1
1Department of Rehabilitation Medicine, Faculty of Medicine, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Kampus Sungai Buloh, Selangor, Malaysia
2Department of Physiology, Faculty of Medicine, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Kampus Sungai Buloh, Selangor Malaysia
\* Correspondence: nfarz@uitm.edu.my

Introduction: Caregiving for individuals with disabilities is a crucial but frequently disregarded component of healthcare. Globally, women account majority of informal caregivers, frequently assuming the role without adequate recognition or support (1). This gendered division of caregiving responsibilities results in considerable physical, emotional, and psychological stress for female caregivers (2,3). Although these women play a vital role, their experiences and needs are frequently overlooked, leading to an 'invisible burden' that negatively impacts their health and well-being. Furthermore, caregiving individual with disabilities carries unique challenges. Our research questions for this review is, what are the current issues or factors related to women caregivers for individuals with disabilities.

**Methods**: We conducted a literature search to determine from 2005 till 2024 with the relevance of topics related to psychological illness, women caregivers, and disability patients using ATLAS ti.8 23. A keyword search, followed by a filter using inclusion criteria from Web of Science, SCOPUS, and PUBMED databases identified 17 peered review articles. However, after the inclusion and exclusion process, only 6 articles were used as the final articles to be reviewed

**Outcome:** A thematic review of this articles identified 35 unique codes that grouped into 5 theme or clusters; women factors, recipient factors, health condition, societal expectation & roles, socioeconomic and social supports. All reviewed papers covering women caregivers of varies populations which are adult stroke, alzheirmers, children with neurodevelopmental disease, autism spectrum disorders and adult with physical disabilities.

	socioecono	Care recipient factor	Health consequences	Social support	Societal expectatio	Women factors	Totals
📾 8: Byrne et al 2009			4			2	6
⊕ 9: Herero et al 2024			2		1	4	7
			1		1		2
a 11: Mbatha et al 2023	5	2	1	5		1	14
	1	1	2		1		5
			1	1	1	3	6
Totals	6	3	11	6	4	10	40

Table 1. Tabulation of reviewed paper per theme and code

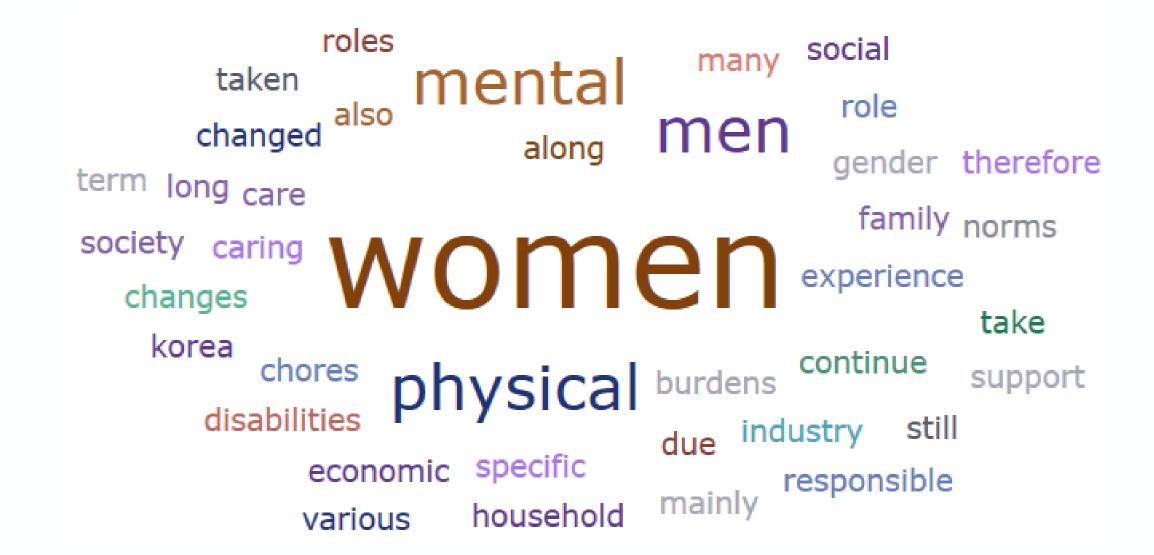


Figure 1. Visualize word frequency of all papers

### **Women Factors**

# Societal Expectation & Roles

In Korea, gender specific norms continue which woman plays more roles in caregiving (Ho-jin et al) In India, traditional, culture and social pressure assigned women to care for elderly (Menon et al)



#### Spend more hours on caregiving -

Most papers agree that women spent more hours during caregiving. (Herero et al, Byrne et al & Ponsoda et al) **Perceived burden-** 3 papers reported that women perception of burden exposed them to poorer psychological illness (Mbatha et al, Herero et al & Byrne et al)

Recepient Factors

(Mbatha et al)

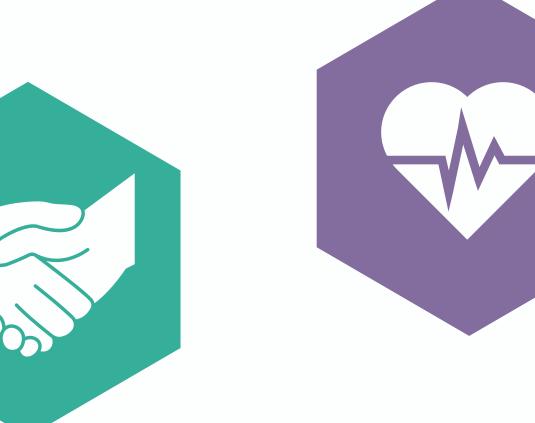
# Socioeconomic to hospital and cost for

More Comorbidities- Recipients who had issues with communication increase caregivers stress (Menon et al)

High dependency- Women requires to care those with high dependency patients

# Frequent visit to hospital and cost for transport were financial burden affected during caregiving. (Mbatha et al) South African rural community are reported to have increase level poverty,

inadequate of education, as well as inadequate health and social services.



### Social Support

Family Support-The education of parents and informal caregivers significantly affects how they provide care for individuals with disabilities (Mbatha et al).

Family members who did not understand the disease concept exposed to family conflict (Ponsoda et al)

Women caregiving the children without support of other family members (Mbatha et al) **Institutional Support-** Lack of support to children with disabilities such as school & caregiving centres.(Mbatha et al)

## Health Consequence

Poorer mental health- Most papers agree that women caregivers will have poorer psychological illness compare to man. (Herero et al, Menon et al, Mbatha et al, Ponsoda et al, Byrne et al)

More Physical burden- Women caregivers exposed with other physical burden such as insomnia, back pain etc. (Menon et al, Byrne et al)

Reduced quality of life- Women generally had poorer quality of life (Byrne et al)

Figure 2. Diagram based on theme and quoted papers

#### Conclusion:

The results and findings will serve as a foundation for further exploration in the field of women's caregiving. Additionally, it will inspire innovation and generate better solutions to address the challenges surrounding this issue.

(Mbatha et al)

### References:

1.National Alliance for Caregiving, & AARP. (2020). Caregiving in the U.S. 2020. National Alliance for Caregiving. https://www.caregiving.org/caregiving-in-the-us-2020-report/

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3.Brody, E. M. (2004). Women and caregiving: A review of the literature. The Gerontologist, 44(3), 118-128. https://doi.org/10.1093/geront/44.3.118