CAREGIVER BURDEN AND HEALTH STATUS PERCEPTION OF FAMILY CAREGIVERS OF PATIENTS RECEIVING PALLIATIVE CARE AT HOME

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Introduction The aim of this study was to explore the repercussions associated with caregiving of patients who receive palliative care at home due to an oncological disease through the assessment of the health status self-perception in the last year, the presence of anxiety and depressive symptoms and the assessment of caregiving burden.

Method Design: Descriptive, cross-sectional study. Sample: family caregivers of patients with oncological disease who are under the follow-up of a home palliative care program hospital-based. Period: July 2015 and December 2016. Analysis: descriptive statistics. Questionnaires: Goldberg anxiety and depression scale; Zarit Caregiver Overload Scale in reduced version

Results 80 family caregivers were included in the study. 56 (70%) were women and 24 (30%) men, with a mean age of 61.75 years (SD=12.98). 55.7% of them had primary education, 45% were a pensioner followed by 23.8% who said they were working. The degree of kinship was spouse/partner (48.8%) followed by daughter (42.5%). 92.5% of caregivers identified themselves as primary caregivers while 7.5% were sole caregivers. In most cases (76.3%) they resided at the same address. In 30% of cases, caregivers also treated other dependents besides the patient. The main reasons for caregiving described were: own initiative (47.5%) and feeling obligated (36.3%). For 40% of the caregivers it was the first experience of caring. The average time caring was 12.98 months (SD=21.41), the average of hours caring per week 38.29 (SD=20.66). 53.8% of caregivers described their relationship as very intimate, however 25% of them identified that the relationship had worsened.

Conclusions In home palliative care scenarios, knowing the circumstances of caregivers and caregiving environment could contribute to recognize and support family caregiving.