

Abstract

The purpose of the research was to explore parenting stress and social support among caregivers of person with disabilities. One hundred and eighty nine parents participated and completed the "Parenting Stress Index--Short Form (任文香, 1995) and "Social Support Scale (湯麗玉, 1991) .

The results suggested that caregivers with difficult children experienced the highest level of parenting stress, followed by parenting difficulty, and having parent-child dysfunctional interaction. Caregivers perceived highest amount of social support in emotional domain, followed by informational support, and instrumental support.

There was statistically significant differences in the amount of social support received by caregivers with different characteristics. Specifically, the older caregivers were, the less social support they perceived. Caregivers who were unemployed or had a non-technical job perceived having less social support. Further, the more children in the family, the lower level of social support the caregivers perceived. Caregivers with university education perceived more support. Finally, those who with low socioeconomic status (SES) reported having less support than those who with middle SES (None of the caregivers interviewed belonged to the high SES group). In addition, there was also statistically significant negative correlation between parenting stress and social support among caregivers.

In terms of obtaining public assistance, caregivers expressed the need for medical security, followed by employment protection, temporary or permanence residential service, social information service, and counseling service. Based on the research findings, suggestions were made for the social welfare department, social workers, special educators, and parent educators. Implications of the study for future research will be discussed.

Key word: Macao, Caregivers, Mentally disabled person, Parental responsibility