

## **SUB THEAM – CARER SUPPORTS AND SERVICES**

### **Community based intervention for caregivers of Elderly Patients with Dementia in a selected district, Sri Lanka**

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**Introduction:** Dementia is a disease of the brain and it is a progressive condition resulting in problems with intellect, memory and personality. Informal caregivers play an important role in looking after elderly patients with dementia in the community.

**Objective:** To develop, implement and assess the effectiveness of a community based intervention for the caregivers of elderly patients with dementia.

**Methodology:** A quasi experimental study was designed based on results of a descriptive study to identify problems among caregivers in the Gampaha district, Sri Lanka. According to criteria, selected caregivers were categorized according to their respective local health areas. The areas with the highest and the second highest number of all caregivers were selected for intervention (38) and control groups (37) respectively. A training manual was developed with the modules using the Nominal Group Technique. Five psychoeducational sessions were held during a period of eight weeks for the intervention group (IG). The Control group (CG) exposed to general health oriented sessions. Six, monthly follow up sessions were held for the IG. The post test was conducted six months after intervention. Effectiveness was assessed using the tool Ways of Coping (Revised), Interviewer Administer Questionnaire validated in Sinhalese language. Scores for pre-post test of each study group and post-post test between intervention and control groups were compared.

**Results:** A statistically significant ( $P=0.05$ ) increase in post intervention satisfactory ways of coping (3.8), family relationships (6.6), leisure time activities (3.8), sharing of own feelings (5.8). The differences between pre-post values of CG for any of the above were not statistically significant.

**Conclusions:** Community based intervention for the caregivers of Elderly patients with dementia are recommended to include in the mental health services in the country.

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