

A Trajectory of Psychosocial Needs of the Caregivers of Persons with Spinal Cord Injury: A Mental Health-care Professional Standpoint

Dear Editor,

Spinal cord injury (SCI) is a calamitous condition that causes temporary or permanent changes in its function resulting either from trauma or nontrauma.^[1] The abrupt nature of injury infers a radical change in various domains on both persons with SCI (PwSCI) and their family caregivers (FCGs).^[2] The unanticipated nature of this condition leaves the FCGs to adopt new roles and responsibilities that they were not aware of it before. The FCG's psychosocial and vocational outcomes are negatively impacted by taking on this additional caregiver responsibility. This caregiving role puts them in a phase where they often neglect their needs and health.

The FCGs of PwSCI are unprepared for the caregiving task as they face mysterious and startling psychosocial sequelae. The FCG's psychosocial needs are secondary to the PwSCI care and recovery, and meeting their Psycho-Social (PS) needs timely are very substantial. The pattern of metamorphosis in PS needs among the FCGs is unique for the PwSCI. The trajectory of the PS needs of the FCGs of PwSCI evolves along different phases, such as during the rehabilitation, at the time of discharge, and postdischarge.^[3] The rehabilitation professionals must address the PS needs of the FCGs timely by providing tailor-made PS interventions. The FCG's forms of adjustment and adaptation skills are varied before the crisis, during and after the crisis; thus, their PS needs will vary as well. Hence, it is pivotal to assess the PS needs of the FCGs at different phases and to provide tailor-made PS interventions. As mental health-care professional, we would like to present the FCG's PS needs at different phases of rehabilitation, which can help the rehabilitation professionals to understand the PS needs of the FCGs to meet their needs, thus helping in the PwSCI recovery as well.

As a psychiatric social worker, we see many PwSCI and their FCGs in our routine clinical practice at the department of neurological rehabilitation in a tertiary care center in India. Psychiatric social workers provide their expert tailor-made PS interventions during inpatient and outpatient neurological rehabilitation as SCI has associated psychosocial sequelae. As mental health-care social workers, we have listed the various PS needs of FCGs of PwSCI at different periods. We carry out routine PS assessments as part of the daily clinical practice for both inpatient and outpatient FCGs. The PS needs from

Table 1: Psychosocial needs of the family caregivers of persons with spinal cord injury at different time periods of rehabilitation

	Psychosocial needs during the rehabilitation		Psychosocial needs after the rehabilitation
	At the time of admission	At the time of discharge	In the community
Expert's perspective	Treatment Financial Emotional	Financial Physical Family Welfare Therapeutic	Therapeutic Financial Emotional Family Vocational Community Welfare Marital
Family caregiver's perspective	Financial Treatment Physical Family	Financial Vocational Physical Welfare Family	Financial Vocational Welfare Marital Family Community
Common psychosocial needs		Financial Treatment Vocational Welfare Emotional	

the FCGs have listed here based on the findings from the above-mentioned PS assessment. The contents mentioned in Table 1 disseminate insights about the psychosocial needs of the FCGs of PwSCI at different periods of rehabilitation.

Addressing the PS issues faced by the PwSCI, and their FCGs are significant in the rehabilitation goals. The rehabilitation professionals must include therapeutic strategies which should address the PS needs of the FCGs in their treatment plans. Prolonged exposure to these PS issues will adversely affect the quality of life and well-being of both PwSCI and their FCGs. Thus, appropriate psychosocial interventions should be planned and implemented to reduce the distress in the PwSCI and his/her family and also to improve their biopsychosocial wellness (physical and mental health). A multidisciplinary approach will help in the assessment, treatment, and management of physical, psychological, social, and vocational issues of the FCGs of PwSCI effectively.

Ethics committee approval: There is no need for ethics committee approval.

Patient informed consent

There is no need for patient informed consent.

Ethics committee approval

There is no need for ethics committee approval.

Financial support and sponsorship

No funding was received.

Conflict of interest

There is no conflict of interest to declare.

Author contributions subject and rate:

- Srikanth Pallerla (20%): Contributed to writing a manuscript draft, literature search
- Shanivaram Reddy K (20%): Contributed to writing a manuscript draft, review of the manuscript
- BP Nirmala (20%): Contributed to writing a manuscript draft, review of the manuscript
- Janardhana N (20%): Contributed to the review and content of the manuscript.
- Anupam Gupta (20%): Contributed to the review and content of the manuscript.

**Pallerla Srikanth, Shanivaram Reddy K,
Berigai Parthasarathy Nirmala,
Navaneetham Janardhana, Anupam Gupta¹**

*Departments of Psychiatric Social Work and ¹Neurological Rehabilitation,
NIMHANS, Bengaluru, Karnataka, India*

Address for correspondence:

Dr. Shanivaram Reddy K,

*Department of Psychiatric Social Work, NIMHANS, Bengaluru - 560 029,
Karnataka, India.*

E-mail: shanivaramreddyk@gmail.com

Received: 04-05-2023

Revised: 13-06-2023

Accepted: 25-07-2023

Published: 29-08-2023

Orcid

Pallerla Srikanth,

{ORCID: 0000-0001-7513-8264}

Shanivaram Reddy K

{ORCID: 0000-0003-4023-6969}

Berigai Parthasarathy Nirmala

{ORCID: 0000-0001-7217-7516}

Navaneetham Janardhana

{ORCID: 0000-0001-5314-4399}

Anupam Gupta

{ORCID: 0000-0001-5347-6545}

References

1. Liao LL, Looi QH, Chia WC, Subramaniam T, Ng MH, Law Jx. Treatment of spinal cord injury with mesenchymal stem cells. *Cell Biosci* 2020;10:112.
2. Middleton JW, Simpson GK, De Wolf A, Quirk R, Descallar J, Cameron ID. Psychological distress, quality of life, and burden in caregivers during community reintegration after spinal cord injury. *Arch Phys Med Rehabil* 2014;95:1312-9.
3. Juguera Rodriguez L, Pardo Rios M, Leal Costa C, Castillo Hermoso M, Perez Alonso N, Diaz Agea JL. Relatives of people with spinal cord injury: A qualitative study of caregivers' metamorphosis. *Spinal Cord* 2018;56:548-59.

This is an open access journal, and articles are distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 License, which allows others to remix, tweak, and build upon the work non-commercially, as long as appropriate credit is given and the new creations are licensed under the identical terms.

Access this article online**Quick Response Code:****Website:**

<https://journals.lww.com/jnbs>

DOI:

10.4103/jnbs.jnbs_8_23

How to cite this article: Srikanth P, Reddy KS, Nirmala BP, Janardhana N, Gupta A. A trajectory of psychosocial needs of the caregivers of persons with spinal cord injury: A mental health-care professional standpoint. *J Neurobehav Sci* 2023;10:62-3.

© 2023 The Journal of Neurobehavioral Sciences | Published by Wolters Kluwer - Medknow