

1. ABSTRACT

Objectives: Pneumoconiosis is a common chronic lung disease amongst construction site workers in Hong Kong. The aim of this project is to examine the caregiving burden and quality of life of the caregivers of patients with pneumoconiosis in Hong Kong and the extent of their depression, anxiety disorders, fatigue and service needs.

Methods: One hundred and nineteen, 84, and 123 caregivers to patients with pneumoconiosis, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and stroke, respectively, were recruited. Demographic and clinical data that reflect the severity of the patients' diseases were collected, and the carers' caregiving burden, health-related quality of life (HRQOL), depression, anxiety disorders and fatigue were measured.

Results: A moderate degree of perceived burden was reported by the carers, and they had a lower quality of life compared to the general population. The frequency of depression, anxiety disorders, and frequent fatigue were 31.9%, 7.6% and 21.9%, respectively.

Burden of care, quality of life, depression, anxiety disorders and fatigue were correlated. Both the caregivers' and patients' demographic and health factors were important determinants of the caregiving experience. The four services most commonly utilised were financial subsidies, recreational activities, caregiving guidance and information and coaching on relaxation techniques and coping skills.

Conclusion: Burden of care, quality of life, depression, anxiety disorders, and fatigue are all important issues for carers. Further work should be carried out to examine the most feasible and cost-effective ways of supporting family carers.