

Abstract

Background There is growing evidence that caregiving experience of caregivers of mentally ill depends much on caregivers' cognitive appraisal of stress situation. On the other hand, evidence supports the role of caregivers' personality as one of the key elements in the appraisal processes involved in stress coping, which is under-studied in the context of caregiving for mentally ill, especially among patients with first episode psychosis.

Aim To investigate the personality correlates of caregiving experience in a multivariate model among caregivers of young patients with first episode psychosis.

Methods 131 patient-caregiver pairs were recruited from specialist clinics serving young patients aged 15-25 with first episode psychosis. Data on sociodemographic variables of patients and caregivers, illness and treatment related variables of patients, caregivers' personality factors and their caregiving experience were collected through chart review, self-reported questionnaires and clinician ratings in a cross-sectional manner.

Results After accounting for sociodemographic variables, illness and treatment related variables, neuroticism (one of the factors on NEO Five Factor Inventory) was found to be positively correlated to negative caregiving experience while agreeableness was negatively correlated to caregivers' negative appraisal in linear regressions. Personality factors were

not shown to have significant associations with positive caregiving experience in linear regressions.

Conclusion Caregivers' personality factors were associated with caregivers' negative caregiving experience. Further research is needed to explore the underlying mechanisms that mediate the observed associations between personality factors and caregiving experience in different clinical contexts related to the care of severe mental illness.