Exploring the Concept of “Young Carer” in Families Living with Parental Mental Illness

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### Exploring the Concept of “Young Carer” in Families Living with Parental Mental Illness

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**Background Information**

The concept of “young carer” has been focused on in the literature as children providing care and assuming household responsibilities when parents have physical or mental disabilities (Hughes & Becker, 2001). For the Central Kingdom, care was defined as “undertaken or provided by a person other than the child or children who are actually living in the household.”

**Aims**

1. To describe the role young carers and household responsibilities of children and youth involved with parents with mental illnesses, how they are performed, and the findings of our study as well as to explore the daily activities and involvement of children and youth involved with mental illness.

2. To assess whether the involvement and orientation of certain measures are used with younger children.

**Methods**

Data were obtained in baseline interviews conducted with children and youth participating in the Family Dynamics Study. Interviews were obtained from 87 children and youth involved with parents with mental illnesses. The study is ongoing and involves repeated interviews of participants, one of which is a structured interview to assess the frequency and nature of the activities that family members are involved in. The study has a sample size of 87 children and youth participating in the Family Dynamics Study, and ongoing interviews that are repeated every six months. The study is ongoing and involves repeated interviews of participants, one of which is a structured interview to assess the frequency and nature of the activities that family members are involved in.

**Results**

While children and youth had many responsibilities, such as doing housework and taking care of siblings, these tasks were often balanced with personal activities and friendships. Children were asked to rate their level of involvement with certain activities on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is “not at all” and 5 is “a lot.” The majority of children rated their involvement in household chores as 3 or less, indicating that they were not involved in these activities on a regular basis. When asked about the amount of personal activities they have in their life right now, 94% of children rated their involvement as 3 or less, indicating that they had few personal activities.

**Discussion**

While children and youth had many responsibilities, such as doing housework and taking care of siblings, these tasks were often balanced with personal activities and friendships. Children were asked to rate their level of involvement with certain activities on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is “not at all” and 5 is “a lot.” The majority of children rated their involvement in household chores as 3 or less, indicating that they were not involved in these activities on a regular basis. When asked about the amount of personal activities they have in their life right now, 94% of children rated their involvement as 3 or less, indicating that they had few personal activities.

**Additional Information Contacts**

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We encourage the use of this work from in formal educational research.