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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 framed in the literature as children providing care and assuming household responsibilities when parents have physical and/or mental disabilities (Ryser & Mooney, 2005). The concept brings renewed attention to basic aspects of care and assuming household responsibilities when parents have physical and/or mental disabilities, including the impact of parental disability on children’s well-being and development.

Aims

1. To describe the care giving and household responsibilities of children and youth living with parents with parental mental illnesses; how they are perceived, and the role of children and youth in caring for their parents.

Methods

Data were gathered during in-depth interviews conducted with children and youth participating in the Family ignorance study. Interviews were conducted with 37 children and youth whose parents had been interviewed for the former study. The interviews explored perceptions of the interaction of care giving and household responsibilities of the children and youth while living with their parents. The responses were analyzed for the levels and frequency of such care giving and household responsibilities in the families.

Results

While children and youth felt psychological effects, such as being busy and having limited socialization, they also experienced care giving and household responsibilities, which may have led to increased responsibilities for the children and youth. The results indicate that children and youth are not only busy but also have increased responsibilities. Furthermore, they report increased amounts of household chores and household activities.

Discussion

While children and youth may feel psychological effects, such as being busy and having limited socialization, they also experience care giving and household responsibilities, which may have led to increased responsibilities for the children and youth. The results indicate that children and youth are not only busy but also have increased responsibilities. Furthermore, they report increased amounts of household chores and household activities. This may have led to increased responsibilities for the children and youth. The results indicate that children and youth are not only busy but also have increased responsibilities. Furthermore, they report increased amounts of household chores and household activities.

Note: The additional information contact is available upon request.

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