



CORRELATION BETWEEN SOCIAL SUPPORT AND PARENTAL STRESS AMONG PARENTS OF DIFFERENTLY ABLED

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ABSTRACT

Aim- To study the correlation between social support and parental stress among parents of differently abled. **Relevance of study-** Parenting a child is an experience full of joy and happiness. But raising a child with disability have unique challenges which results in chronic stress. Understanding what contributes to parenting stress will lead to more targeted interventions to support families and their children. hence the need of study is to find correlation between social support and parental stress among both parents of differently abled including all types of disabilities and parental stress according to all type of disabilities and to consider all types of social support. **Methodology-** In this cross sectional study 28 parents of differently abled were selected, according to the inclusion and exclusion criteria. Written consent was taken from the subjects prior to the study. The entire procedure was explained to the participants and demographic details of the patient were taken. **Result-** There is significant correlation between social support and parental stress. **Conclusion-** From the study it is concluded that there is negative relation between social support and parental stress which means that a low level of social support is associated with a high level of parental stress. The study also showed parents of children with cerebral palsy have higher parental stress than other type of disabilities.

(Index Terms – Social Support, Parental Stress, Differently abled, Parents)

INTRODUCTION

Parenting is an amazingly complex, exhausting, responsible, and at times unrewarding job, yet is accomplished by most of humanity with dedication, pleasure, and love. ⁽¹⁾ Becoming a parent involves a shift of attention and resources from the self towards one's child, thereby (reducing self-nourishing attention. ⁽²⁾ For virtually, all parents caring for a child is an experience full of triumphs and joy, as well as challenges and stress. The experiences of parents of children with disabilities are likely similar in many ways to the experiences of parents of children without disabilities, but there are some important distinctions that can cause parents of children with disabilities to be at increased risk for psychosocial distress. ⁽³⁾ Secondly, depression and anxiety are considered in fathers, as well as in mothers. Fathers play a prominent role in care giving and evidence demonstrates the importance of father-child interactions in child development. ⁽⁴⁾

According to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), disability refers to having impairments in physical, mental, intellectual or sensory functions that can hinder one's full and effective participation in the society on equal basis with others. ⁽⁵⁾ Larger part of disability is contributed by physical disabilities such as visual impairment, speech and hearing impairment, and locomotor disability, though 30% of all cases of disability belong to mental illnesses such as mental retardation, Down syndrome, Cerebral palsy and other such conditions. ⁽⁶⁾ Parents raising children with disabilities face substantial demands. ⁽⁷⁾ Raising a child with intellectual disability brings a set of challenges for parents in terms of managing a growing need for care, availability of support and dealing with the child's limitations. ⁽⁸⁾ The added challenges of caring for a child with a disability may lead to more stress and greater physical and emotional health risks for parents and their families (e.g. increased conflict with spouse) compared to families without a child with a disability. ⁽³⁾ Many studies have reported that parents of children with disabilities are likely to experience significantly higher levels of parenting stress than those of children without disabilities. ⁽⁷⁾

Parental stress, defined as parental perceptions of an imbalance between the demands of parenting and available resources. ⁽⁹⁾ Parents who experience high levels of stress and anxiety may feel motivated to engage in behaviours aimed at reducing or avoiding dangerous

situations for their child⁽¹⁰⁾. Parents who experience extreme levels of this type of stress may be less able to implement interventions to help their children⁽¹¹⁾. Parents might need to spend most of their time taking care of their disabled child, especially if the child has severe disabilities, and the parents are then unable to engage in other activities, curtailing their social life and negatively affecting their QOL⁽¹²⁾.

Social support is defined as the perception or experience that one is loved and cared for by others, Esteemed and valued, and part of a social network of Mutual assistance and obligations⁽¹³⁾. Support of family is a significant factor that contributes to parental stress in raising children with disabilities.⁽¹¹⁾ Perceived social support can help reduce stress and obtain favourable effects. In the field of parenting, high-quality perceived social support motivates parents to obtain parenting confidence, experience, and skills, which could reduce parenting stress levels⁽¹⁴⁾. Social support can significantly enhance people's perception of self-efficacy. There exists a positive association between social support and parenting efficacy. Those studies showed that parenting stress, social support, and parenting efficacy were closely related to each other for parents raising children with disabilities, and social support might mediate the association between parenting stress and parenting efficacy for those parents.⁽¹⁵⁾

NEED OF STUDY

Parenting a child is an experience full of joy and happiness. But raising a child with disability have unique challenges which results in chronic stress. Many studies have reported that parents of children with disabilities likely to experience higher level of parenting stress than that of without disabilities. Understanding what contributes to parenting stress will lead to more targeted interventions to support families and their children. It will also help to find ways to mediate or moderate parenting stress to relieve their mental pressure and facilitate positive family functioning. There are many studies on the relationship among parental stress, depression, and social support of mothers of children with disabilities but there are limited studies on both parents of differently abled children including all types of disabilities hence the need of study is to find **correlation between social support and parental stress among both parents of differently abled including all types of disabilities and parental stress according to all type of disabilities and to consider all types of social support.**

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Population and sample

Parents of differently able aged 20-60 years were included, the study design is observational Cross-Sectional study, and the method of sampling was Purposive sampling. The study setting was the Rehabilitation centre, Physiotherapy Clinics, Residential Areas, Paediatric Clinic and the minimum sample size for the study was, 28 therefore the sample size in this study was taken 28. Study duration was six months. The criteria for inclusion was parents of differently abled, Parents of differently abled between age 20-60 years. and the participants were excluded if they 1) Parents of normal children.

Materials: Pen, Paper, Patient evaluation sheet, Self made questionnaire, Parental stress index, Consent form.

PROCEDURE

Prior commencement of the study permission and ethical clearance was taken from institutional ethical committee of Dr. Ulhas Patil College of Physiotherapy & concerned clinics. A cross – sectional study was administered and subjects were screened on the basis of inclusion – exclusion criteria. A brief demographic data was obtained and a written consent was taken from all the participants, the nature and purpose of the study was explained to them. I studied all types of social support, and made this questionnaire. I tried to frame relevant question of each social support, each type of social support having 2 or 3 questions. The questionnaire was validated from professors of Dr. Ulhas Patil college of Physiotherapy.

The reliability of questionnaire was done by test-retest reliability which is 0.78. First, parents of differently abled were given all the information about both questionnaire and how to fill the both questionnaires. Then self made questionnaire on social support was given to the parents to assess the social support. Then parental stress index was given to the parents to assess parental stress. Participants were given printed copy of the scale in their language. After data collection, data entry was done in MS Excel. Statistical analysis was done using Minitab 17 software

OUTCOMES MEASURES

1. Self made questionnaire on social support
2. Parental Stress Scale

1. SELF MADE QUESTIONNAIRE ON SOCIAL SUPPORT

I have studied all type of social support and made this questionnaire. I tried to frame relevant question of each social support. Each type of social support having two or three questions. Then I have validated questionnaire from professors of Dr. Ulhas Patil College of physiotherapy and reliability is done by test-retest reliability. Reliability of questionnaire is 0.78. Social support is assessed by self made questionnaire of social support. It is a 14-item self-report scale designed to assess degree of social support from formal social supports like friends' family relatives and informal social supports like social networks social groups. Each item is rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 0 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). Total score can range from 0 to 56, and higher score indicate a higher level of social support.

2. PARENTAL STRESS SCALE

Parental stress was assessed by the Parental Stress Scale. It is an 18-item self-report scale designed to assess the degree of distress resulting from childrearing. Each item is rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Total scores can range from 18 to 90, and higher scores indicate a higher level of distress from child-rearing.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

All data was collected and entered into Microsoft Excel. All the results are shown in tabular as well as graphical format to visualize the statistically significant difference more clearly. Normality of the data was checked using Ryan-Joiner Test. As the p-value is more than or equal to the significance level 0.10, we conclude that our data follow a normal distribution. The p value less than 0.05 shows the significant correlation between social support and Stress score. Karl Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to find the correlation between social support and Stress Score. All the data was analysed using Minitab 17 software

Normality Test - Ryan-Joiner Test

Table 1: Represents normality for different variables

As the p-value is more than the significance level (0.10), the data follow a normal distribution.

Variables	P-value
Social Support	>0.10
Parental Stress	>0.10

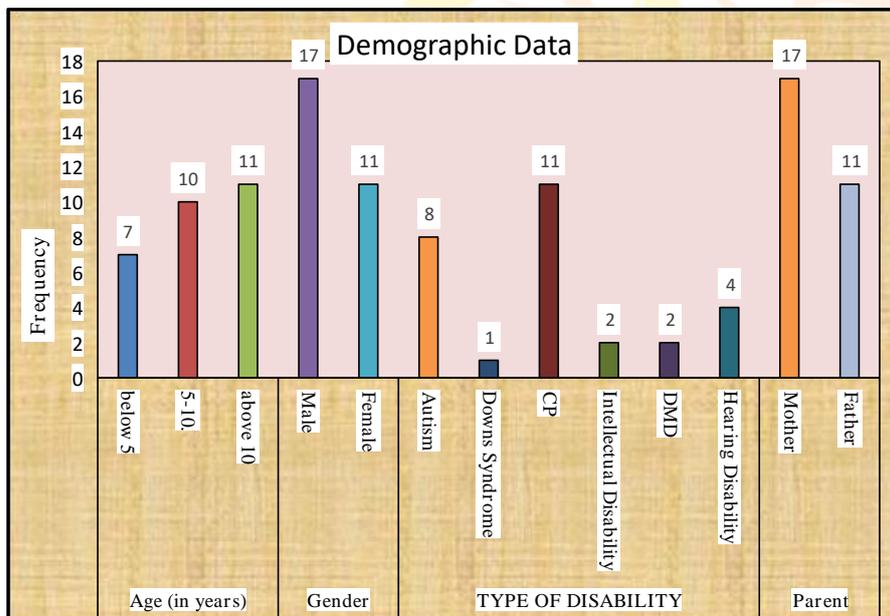
RESULTS

Variable	Groups	Frequency	Percentage
Age (in years)	below 5	7	25.00
	5-10.	10	35.71
	above 10	11	39.29
Gender	Male	17	60.71
	Female	11	39.29
TYPE OF DISABILITY	Autism	8	28.57
	Down Syndrome	1	3.57
	CP	11	39.29
	Intellectual Disability	2	7.14
	DMD	2	7.14
	Hearing Disability	4	14.29
Parent	Mother	17	60.71

	Father	11	39.29
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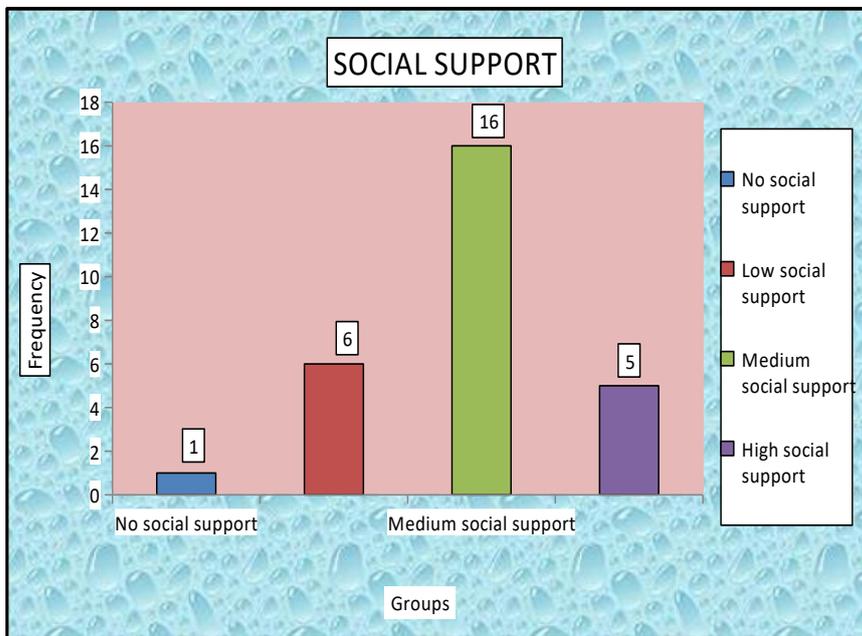
Table 2: Represents demographic data variable, groups, frequency and percentage of age, gender, type of disability and parent.

Variable	Groups	Score	Frequency	Percentage
SOCIAL SUPPORT	No social support	0-14	1	3.57
	Low social support	15-28	6	21.43
	Medium social support	29-42	16	57.14
	High social support	43-56	5	17.86



Graph 1: Represents demographic data variable, groups, frequency and percentage of age, gender, type of disability and parent.

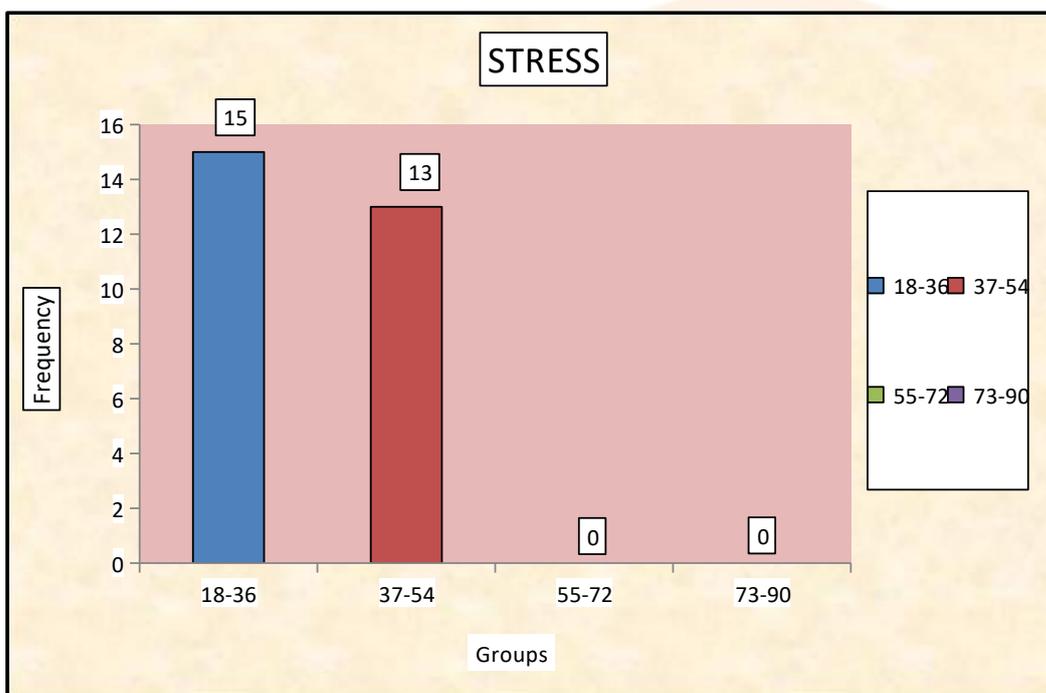
Table 3: Represents social support showing score, frequency, percentage.



Graph 2: Represents social support showing score, frequency, percentage.

Table 4: Represents Parental stress showing score, frequency, percentage.

Variable	Score	Frequency	Percentage
STRESS	18-36	15	53.57
	37-54	13	46.43
	55-72	0	0.00
	73-90	0	0.00



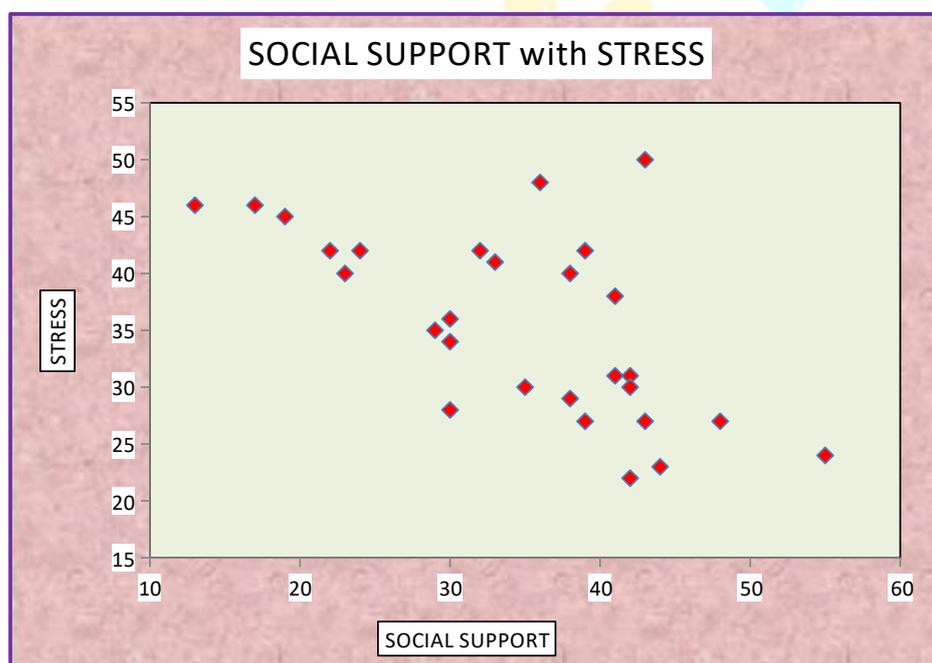
Graph 3: Represents Parental stress showing score, frequency, percentage.

Table 5: Represents Correlation between Social support and Parental Stress

Karl Pearson correlation coeff.

SOCIAL SUPPORT with PARENTAL STRESS	Correlation coefficient (r) value	p value
	-0.61	0.001

Karl Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to find the correlation between Social support and Stress score. The correlation coefficient was -0.61 with p value 0.001. The p value less than 0.05 shows the significant correlation between Social support and Stress score.



Graph 4: Represents correlation between social support and parental stress

Interpretation: There is significant correlation between Social support and Parental stress.

DISCUSSION

The present study aimed to determine the correlation between social support and parental stress among parents of differently able children.

Therefore, we examined the correlation between parental stress and social support in a sample of 28 parents of differently able. I have studied all type of social support and made this questionnaire. I tried to frame relevant question of each social support. Every type of social support having two or three questions. Then I have validated questionnaire from professors of Dr. Ulhas Patil College of physiotherapy and reliability is done by test-retest reliability. Reliability of questionnaire is 0.78 and self-made questionnaire of social support was made.

In this study, majority of parents had medium levels of social support. The study included all types of social support, and the majority of parents received more formal social support than informal support. Many parents receive substantial social support from family and relatives but not from other social groups. The study noted that the majority of parents of differently abled have a low income and have little understanding of social support. One possible reason is that social support is an instrumental aid,⁽¹⁶⁾ emotional concern, and the flow of information between people,⁽¹⁷⁾ which can improve psychological endurance and help parents become more capable of carrying out the difficult parenting tasks.⁽¹⁸⁾

Social support from extended family members, friends, and informal social networks in the community moderates the influence of parental stress on depression among mothers of children with disabilities. In this study, parents of differently abled, 3.57% had no social support, 21.43% had Low social support, 57.14% had Medium social support and 17.86% had High social support. Parents of differently abled who perceive a low level of social support experience high levels of parental stress.

Our Study has used self made questionnaire which includes all types of social support because whereas previous studies used other measurement tools for social support that did not include all types of social support. Social support enhances parent's ability to solve problems and reduces their experience of physical and mental health issues in stressful situations thus social support has been seen as one of the most important protective factors for the development of resilience of parents of children with disabilities.⁽¹⁹⁾⁽²⁰⁾ Social support referred to the provision of emotional, informational, and instrumental assistance from social networks, which can relieve the stress of life to some extent.⁽²¹⁾⁽²²⁾ Meanwhile, previous studies have demonstrated that various forms of social support as a coping mechanism could be a buffer against stress.⁽²³⁾ Those social support, including social networks material happiness, and family social climate, are related to reducing parental stress. Therefore, parents with greater social support experience were likely to have lower parenting stress.⁽²⁴⁾⁽²⁵⁾⁽²⁶⁾

The study shown that parental stress is low due to medium social support. As the parental stress is low due to more social support more of the parents suffer from high parental stress due to low social support. Understanding what contributes to parenting stress will lead to more targeted interventions to support families and their children. This result suggested that parenting stress experienced by parents raising children with disabilities might decrease the possibility of gaining social support, as too much parenting stress can negatively impact parents' ability to seek social help, or even lead to the abandonment of their children.⁽²⁷⁾ Parental stress cause many psychological problems to parents due to more stress because of differently abled children. Parents of differently abled often experience a higher level of stress than parents of without disabilities, regardless of categories of disabilities. When parents of differently abled reported a higher level of social support, some indicated a low level of parenting stress and significantly higher life satisfaction scores compared to those with a high level of parenting stress and lower life satisfaction. When parents of children with disability experienced high level of parenting stress, they would view themselves as ineffective and might be embarrassed about their child's behavior.⁽²⁸⁾⁽²⁹⁾

Our study has shown the negative correlation between social support and parental stress among parents of differently abled children. As the study has shown social support is high and parental stress is low. Previous studies which showed that parents with more social support available to them showed lower levels of distress than parents with less external support. Moreover, there was a significant negative correlation between parenting stress and social support. Similarly, helping parents learn effective parenting strategies and increase self-efficacy has flow-on effects on reducing psychological stress,⁽³⁰⁾ which can further encourage them to gain more social support. If parents of children with disabilities actively seek social support, it will enhance their well-being, parenting quality, parenting efficacy, and child resilience.⁽³¹⁾⁽³²⁾ Practitioners and others work together to carry out more public activities and help integrate families of differently abled in society in order to decrease parenting stress.

CONCLUSION

There is negative relation between social support and parental stress which means that a low level of social support is associated with a high level of parental stress. The study also showed parents of children with cerebral palsy have higher parental stress than other type of disabilities.

LIMITATIONS

- All types of disabilities are not included.
- A small sample size was used; the sample size should be raised to include a variety of disabilities.

FUTURE SCOPE

Future studies should include

- Intervention strategies to help people cope up with their parental stress.
- All other types of disabilities.
- Both the parents.

CLINICAL IMPLICATION

To assist parents in managing the stress of parenthood, we can recommend that they participate in social organizations and programmes. Parental stress can be reduced through Meditation for parents of differently able. One way to lessen parental stress is through parent counselling. The government should enact the parents of differently abled to seek social support.

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