

Subjective Well-Being Among Family Caregivers of Prolonged Mechanical Ventilation Patients: Exploring the Role of Illness Representations and Coping Resources

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Abstract : Purpose: Prolonged mechanical ventilation (PMV) places significant emotional, physical, and social burdens on family caregivers. Despite these challenges, limited attention has been given to their subjective well-being (SWB). The aim of this study was to explore the factors associated with SWB among family caregivers of hospitalized PMV patients, utilizing the self-regulation model as a theoretical framework. Specifically, we examined how illness representations and coping resources - a sense of coherence and perceived social support- are associated with SWB. Methods: The study involved 134 family caregivers who completed validated questionnaires measuring SWB, illness representations, sense of coherence, and perceived social support. Path analysis was employed to investigate the direct and indirect effects of illness representations on SWB and the mediating role of coping resources. Results: Positive illness representations, such as perceptions of shorter illness timelines and greater treatment control, were linked to higher SWB through a higher sense of coherence and social support. Conversely, negative representations, including severe perceived consequences and heightened emotional responses, negatively impacted SWB. Symptom burden and illness understanding did not significantly influence coping resources or SWB. Path analysis highlighted significant indirect effects, demonstrating the importance of coping resources in mediating these relationships. Conclusion: The findings highlight the need for interventions targeting adaptive illness representations and strengthening caregivers' coping resources. Enhancing the sense of coherence and social support can mitigate caregiver burden and improve SWB. The study offers practical implications for healthcare providers in supporting family caregivers and improving outcomes for patients and families.

Keywords : well-being, illness representations, coping resources, prolonged mechanical ventilation

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