

3937494 NSPS/M : MAJOR : MENTAL HEALTH AND PSYCHIATRIC NURSING
M.N.S.(MENTAL HEALTH AND PSYCHIATRIC NURSING).

KEY WORDS : STRESS / COPING WITH STRESS / CAREGIVERS OF
SCHIZOPHRENIC PATIENTS

EUAREE SARIGA : STRESS AND COPING STRATEGIES OF
CAREGIVERS OF SCHIZOPHRENIC PATIENTS. THESIS ADVISORS : TASSANA
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Schizophrenia, a chronic and pervasive mental disorder, ranks first among all psychotic disorders. Due to personality deterioration, patients can not function well in their families and societies. Therefore, family members involved in caring for these patients may suffer from stress. The purpose of this study is to identify situations that cause stress, the nature and degrees of stress symptoms, and the ways in which these caregivers try to cope with stress. The sample population consisted of 260 caregivers who brought schizophrenic patients to Siriraj Hospital, Srithanya Hospital and Somdej-Chaophraya Hospital between 26 March and 31 August 1998.

The results of the study show that the most stressful situation is experienced in a situation where caregivers have to cope with a patient who does harm to others. But less stressful situations such as financial burden for living expense, and medical expenses were always found. Many caregivers experience stress on a mild level. Stress symptoms may be physical, emotional or spiritual. They may relate to cognitive and social behavior. Coping aims at solving problems or situations and reduce suffering. In conclusion the study suggested that nurses should be aware of the importance of schizophrenic caregivers. The nurses' role should be extended to also help the caregivers with techniques such as psychoeducation, counselling, advice and support in order to reduce their stress and cope with stress appropriately.