

Thesis Title A Causal Model of Caregiver Role Stress in Wives
 of Chronically Ill Patients.

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Abstract

Wives caring for their chronically ill husbands are continually under a heavy burden. They frequently manifest chronic stress which causes their own health to deteriorate and has a negative effect on their husband's quality of life. An understanding of the factors causing stress in wives is needed to develop an effective health care service and to enhance the role of wives who are potential caregivers. Thus, the purpose of this study was to test a model, based on the Roy Adaptation Model framework, describing the causal relationships among socioeconomic factors, past marital relationship, social support, caregiving demand, caregiving appraisal and caregiving role stress.

One hundred and four cases of wives caring for husbands' with the diagnosed of stroke, brain and spinal cord injuries and Parkinson's disease were obtained from outpatient neuroclinics in six hospitals in Bangkok. Data were collected from interviews or questionnaires two times in a month. At first, data on socioeconomic factors, past marital relationship, social support, caregiving demand and caregiving

appraisal were collected. One month later, caregiving role stress data were collected. Data were analyzed by using path analysis.

Results indicated that socioeconomic factors and past marital relationship had a direct positive effect on social support ($\beta = .27$, $p < .002$; $\beta = .45$, $p < .001$, respectively) and explained 27% of variance. Social support had a direct negative effect ($\beta = -.20$, $p < .05$) and caregiving demand had a direct positive effect ($\beta = .29$, $p < .01$) on threat appraisal, and explained 14% of variance. Past marital relationship and social support had a direct negative effect ($\beta = -.20$, $p < .05$; $\beta = -.20$, $p < .05$ respectively) caregiving demand had a direct positive effect ($\beta = .24$, $p < .01$) on stress appraisal, and explained 12% of variance. Social support and caregiving demand had a direct positive effect on benefit appraisal ($\beta = .22$, $p < .05$; $\beta = .40$, $p < .001$ respectively) and explained 19% of variance. Threat and stress appraisal had a direct positive effect on caregiver role stress ($\beta = .44$, $p < .001$; $\beta = .39$, $p < .001$ respectively), and explained 19% of variance. In addition, socioeconomic factors and past marital relationship had an indirect effect on threat, stress, and benefit appraisal through social support. Past marital relationship had an indirect effect on caregiving role stress through stress appraisal. Social support and caregiving demand had an indirect effect on caregiver role stress through threat and stress appraisal. The results supported the validity of propositions of the model and extended knowledge about the role concept in the role function mode of the Roy Adaptation Model.

Findings suggest that to enhance the role of wives who are potential caregivers requires an effective nursing care system. Nurse should exercise and develop capabilities and accountabilities to work in collaborations with other health care personnels to improve both patients' and caregivers' quality of life.