

Background; Caretakers who give care to people with mental illness are affected in a variety of ways and degrees. The interplay of caretaking challenges; poverty, lack of support from others, depression, discrimination and stigma, emotional trauma, and poor or interrupted sleep are associated with challenges of caring for mentally ill patients.

Objective; to establish the challenges of caring for mentally ill patients in the community among family members in Butabika National Mental Referral Hospital. Some of the challenges are stigma, expensive medicine, stress, violence and aggression, few family members to care, lack of income, Poverty, lack of sleep, poor hygiene of the patient, no support group, patients are difficult to understand, refusal of medication to mention but few.

Design; A cross-section study was carried out involving 164 caretakers of participants with mentally ill patients within Kampala. Data were collected from caretakers about the challenges of caring for mentally ill patients in the community among family members in Butabika National Mental Referral Hospital.

Results; The caretakers reported various degrees of challenges like stigma, expensive medicine, stress, violence and aggression, few family members to care, lack of income, Poverty, lack of sleep, poor hygiene of the patient, no support group, patients are difficult to understand, refusal of medication to mention but few. Responsibilities around caretaking were mostly shared among close relatives.

Conclusion; Caretakers challenges were the one mentioned above. These findings highlighted the need for interventions to support people with mental illness and their caretakers. These will ameliorate families financial, facilitates early diagnosis and management, and improve the quality of life of family caretakers of persons with mental illness.