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Child Disability in Morocco: The Impact on Caregivers and Their Quality of Life

Topic: Specific Target Groups (Children, Women, Elderly, Athletes, Musicians, Refugees, Ethnic Groups, Workers, and Others)

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BACKGROUND

A child's disability profoundly impacts the entire family, especially caregivers, who are often the parents. In Morocco, caregivers face unique and often overlooked realities that require special attention. The aim of our study is to highlight the multidimensional challenges faced by caregivers of children with disabilities in the Marrakech and Souss-Massa regions and propose recommendations to improve support for these caregivers through policy enhancements and available services.

This was an observational, cross-sectional, descriptive, and multicenter study conducted over six months, including 200 participants from the Marrakech and Souss-Massa regions. Inclusion criteria: Family or non-family caregivers residing in the Marrakech or Souss-Massa regions who are responsible for at least one child with a disability, regardless of the type of disability, and of all age groups.

METHODS

A total of 200 participants were included in the study, covering all types of caregivers of children with disabilities. Regarding caregiver characteristics, the majority were mothers (83%), followed by fathers and other family members. The average age of caregivers was 39 years, ranging from 23 to 72 years. Most caregivers had three or more children (60%). The socioeconomic level of caregivers showed that 39% belonged to a low socioeconomic status, while 60% had a middle level. Educational attainment revealed that 35% were illiterate, followed by 31% with a primary education. In terms of employment, 85% of caregivers were not engaged in any professional activity. Financial constraints were the most significant challenge, affecting 56% of caregivers. Other difficulties included access to healthcare (45%), concerns about their child's future (43%), the child's suffering (40%), and schooling difficulties (39%). Mental health impacts were notable, with anxiety being the most prevalent (45%), followed by sleep disorders (27%). Additionally, 22% of caregivers expressed fear of having another child, and 18% suffered from depression. Somatic repercussions included musculoskeletal disorders (30%) and diabetes (10%).

RESULTS

The study found that the impact on caregivers' marital life was relatively low, with only 16% reporting significant effects. Additionally, 17% reported repercussions on their relationships with other children, and 22% mentioned an impact on family relationships. Financial adjustments were the most common, affecting 92% of caregivers, followed by social and family life adaptations (68%).

CONCLUSION

People with disabilities in Morocco encounter substantial obstacles in accessing healthcare and achieving social integration. To mitigate these challenges, proposed solutions include respite services, enhanced psychological and financial support, and specialized training programs. The successful implementation of these measures necessitates strong collaboration between institutions and local communities.

Statement of Disclosures

None

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