Reviewer's report

Title: The impact of long term caregiving for older adults with severe mental illness on the daily life of informal caregivers. A qualitative study.

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Reviewer: Barbara Bien

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The paper rises an important issue of relatively poorly recognized outcomes of long-term caregiving for older persons with severe mental diseases in the informal caregivers. The study attempts to find out or discover other than earlier described in literature determinants of caregivers’ approach to long-term caregiving, those dependent on status of cared-for persons or diverse resources as well as related to emotional response to chronically ill person with some psychiatric diseases.

1. However, the study question seems to be not enough precisely defined, namely “to explore which other factors may shed light on our understanding the caregivers’ appraisal of caregiving situation”, in view of the article title and presented results.

2. The qualitative study was applied to clarify and interpret caregivers’ experiences of at least 6-month period of care-provision. The method section seems to be brief and cursory. It takes no notice of study design. The paper does not present any details referring to the dyads: caregiver - care receiver nor reasons for care. There is no data on the study questionnaire nor questions, except of the interview headings presented shortly at the Table.

The convenient sample - composed of 19 Dutch speaking caregivers - was recruited to the study. All of them were the most important caregivers for cared-for persons, according to the nurse judgments, that was not confirmed by the respondents. Five other caregivers (24%) refused to participate in the study due to their emotions.

An associative inductive strategy was applied to interpret the data from interview in order to search any relations between researchers’ interpretations.

3. The results show that the applied methodology enabled to define only two (?) types of caregivers with further dichotomized attributes: those who perceive freedom of choice with respect to caring as a voluntary act (type 1 of caregiver), and those who consider caring as an unavoidable obligation (type 2 of caregiver). If it is a true it could mean that the sample was not a representation of informal caregivers at all. Although ‘the freedom of choice’ as a concept sounds very interesting, its relevance to caring process seems to be simplified. Moreover, the authors ascribe exclusively positive features of coping with care tasks to type 1 caregiver, and the negative attributes to type 2 caregiver what seems to be unbelievable from the clinical perspective. Other studies show that the outcomes
of care are more complex, especially with regard to co-existing aspects of 
negative impact of care and positive value of care, which both are present to 
some extent in all caregivers.
4. The manuscript weakly adhere to the relevant standards for reporting.
5. The discussion rather carries on the description of the results than combines 
them with an existing knowledge.
5. The article does not present any formal conclusions, except of 
recommendations for caregivers to redefine their personal life.
6. The study limitations were weakly stated.
7. Authors clearly acknowledge the work contributors and respondents.
8. The title of article not precisely corresponds with what has been found.
9. The writing is comprehensible, however visibly not perfect.

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being 
published

**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a 
statistician.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests.