

How Multiple Myeloma Affect Those Who Care: Hidden Struggles

Pratibha Thakur

Jyothi Chakrabarty

Sharada Mailankody

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Pratibha Thakur, Jyothi Chakrabarty *, Sharada Mailankody

Email: jyothi.r@manipal.edu

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Introduction

The authors aim to attract the readers' attention to how multiple myeloma affects their caregivers. Malignant plasma cells are a characteristic of multiple myeloma (MM), and they are responsible for 10–15% of haematological cancers and 1% of all cancers (Rajkumar, 2022).

Multiple myeloma (MM) affects 2,10,697 people globally (4.3/10,00,000), with 11,602 affected individuals in India (1.4/10,00,000). In India, multiple myeloma (MM) causes approximately 5,900 deaths annually. The global mortality rate from multiple myeloma is 72,453, accounting for 1% of all cancer-related deaths (N et al., 2019).

A major contributing factor to the higher survival rates among myeloma patients is the advancement of antimyeloma drugs (Kumar et al., 2014). Myeloma patients often experience fatigue and bone pain. They may also have limited mobility, which could make them dependent on caregivers for everyday tasks. Regular hospital visits are required for therapy, monitoring, and

supportive care as part of standard myeloma treatment (Kyle et al., 2003; Rajkumar, 2022). Family caregivers of patients with newly diagnosed multiple myeloma (NDMM) also encounter additional difficulties. They have to manage the uncertainty of the disease's course as well as the need to adapt to its demands (Gatopoulou et al., 2022).

Caregivers for people with multiple myeloma (MM) can be paid or unpaid, such as friends and family. They play an essential role in meeting the daily needs of their patients as well as their physical and emotional needs. Caregivers may experience higher levels of stress because MM is a chronic condition that causes a gradual loss of physical capacity and independence (Bates- Fraser et al., 2023).

Professionals, family members, and occasionally other close relatives provide long-term care to patients with multiple myeloma (MM). A prolonged duration of treatment may impact the overall quality of life and emotional health of patients and caregivers (Doğan & Demirel, 2023).

In regard to the health of the people they look after, unpaid informal caregivers may sometimes put their own needs aside. This may result in a significant burden of unfulfilled physical and psychological needs for these caregivers, in addition to the difficulties faced by the patients in their care (Pereira et al., 2020).

Myeloma has a major impact on the emotional, social, and work-related aspects of patients and caregivers. Patients seemed to be less involved in managing their conditions, relying on unpaid caregivers for emotional and practical assistance while frequently ignoring their own needs (Molassiotis et al., 2011).

Pratibha Thakur¹, Jyothi Chakrabarty*², Sharada Mailankody³

¹PhD Scholar, Department of Medical-Surgical Nursing, Manipal College of Nursing, Manipal Academy of Higher Education, Manipal, Udupi, Karnataka, India.

²Professor and HOD, Department of Medical-Surgical Nursing, Manipal College of Nursing, Manipal Academy of Higher Education, Manipal, Udupi, Karnataka, India.

³Associate Professor, Department of Medical Oncology, Kasturba Medical College, Manipal, Udupi, Karnataka, India.

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*Corresponding Author

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A correlation was observed between deteriorating financial status and a decrease in the quality of life of caregivers. The quality of care that caregivers can offer patients with multiple myeloma may be affected by their own declining quality of life (Metin *et al.*, 2023).

Multiple myeloma diagnosis has a profound impact on patients, caregivers, and society at large. It negatively impacts regular daily activities, family life, social activities, and health-related

quality of life (HRQoL). It also has significant financial, clinical, and humanistic impacts (Gatopoulou *et al.*, 2022).

The authors address the difficulties faced by those who provide care to multiple myeloma patients, a cancer that affects plasma cells. These caregivers, whether they are family members or professionals, are essential for helping patients with long-term care. Caregivers experience a wide range of difficulties and challenges, for which solutions need to be devised to improve oncological care services to improve their overall quality of life.

The identification of caregiver challenges in the context of multiple myeloma care highlights the necessity of policy initiatives that offer comprehensive support, ensure patient well-being, and maintain standards of quality care.

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