

# Common care challenges from female spouse of the COPD patient: content analysis

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**Purpose**

Due to the irreversible and progressive development, patients may come across problems such as different disabled body parts with inconsistent progress, as well as recurrent attacks, etc., which lead the female spouse of the patient to overwhelming pressure and torment. The purpose of this study is to offer references to common problems for female spouse of the patient through content analysis.

**Method**

40 female spouses of the patients from the chest out-patient department and the COPD home care unit of a medical center in southern Taiwan were interviewed, based on their care burden. Content analysis was used to set the profile and to analyze.

**Results**

40 female spouses of the patients had the average age of 62.3 years old. The average years of caring was 4.6 years. 25% of the subjects had jobs and 92.5% of the subjects had religious beliefs. 65% of them had chronic diseases, and 32.5% had one chronic disease. The perceived health status of most of the subjects (50%) was neither good nor bad, and only 7.5% of them perceived bad health status. The average age of the patients was 72.8 years old and averagely affected with COPD for 7.1 years. 17.5% of the patients used oxygen. 52.5% were not admitted within the past year and 47.5% were admitted within the past year, and among them, 24.5% of them were admitted once. 72.5% has chronic diseases and 35% of them had two chronic diseases.(Table 1 )

The COPD burdens that are common to the female spouses in order are listed as the following: 1. They concern about the condition of the patients(70%) 2. They do not know how to cope with emergent conditions (62.5%) 3. They are afraid that they can't afford the medical expense(50%) 4. They feel alone and out of help(25%).(Table 2 )

**Table 1** Characteristic of Female Spouses  
Caregivers and Patients (N= 40)

Variable	Mean/ %
<b>Female spouses caregivers</b>	
Age	62.3 years
Caring years	4.6 years
Had jobs	25 %
Religious beliefs	92.5 %
Chronic diseases	65 %
One chronic disease	32.5 %
<b>Health status</b>	
Neither good nor bad	50 %
Bad health status	7.5 %
<b>Patients</b>	
Age	72.8 years
Averagely affected with COPD	7.1 years.
Used oxygen	17.5 %
Admitted within the past year	47.5 %
Chronic diseases	72.5 %
Two chronic diseases	35 %

**Table 2** Female Spouses Common Care Challenges (N= 40)

Content analysis item	%
They concern about the condition of the patients	70
They do not know how to cope with emergent conditions	62.5
They are afraid that they can't afford the medical expense	50
They feel alone and out of help	25

**Conclusion**

It's crucial for the spouses that nursing staff can find out their torment and evaluate the situation so that the staff can solve the care challenges of the female spouses.Some advice was suggested: emergent service should be offered promptly, and so do the mental and social support. These assistances can relieve the care burden of the female spouse, and help them to get a better quality of life in the meanwhile.