Dissertation Report

Challenges and Coping Strategies for women with epilepsy; A study of women members attending Epilepsy Support Fundation

BY

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ABSTRACT

Epilepsy (IBE) defined epilepsy as a disorder of the brain characterized by an enduring predisposition to generate epileptic seizures and by neurobiological, cognitive, psychological, and social consequences of that condition. Research in Zimbabwe has focused on the challenges faced by women with epilepsy. Apparently no research been done on the coping strategies employed by women with condition in Zimbabwe. The current study is therefore to find out the coping strategies for women with epilepsy. This study, examined the coping strategies used by women with epilepsy (WWE). The study’s objectives were to find out the psychological and social challenges being faced by women with epilepsy and the coping strategies being used. The respondents were 32 women with epilepsy of the Epilepsy Support Foundation (ESF) in Harare Purposive sampling was used to select the key informant the ESF support Group Co-ordinator. The study revealed a number of psychological and social challenges being faced by women with epilepsy. Social challenges where mentioned by women with epilepsy hence the social challenges are the worst than the seizures themselves. The highest social challenge was being unmarried. On the psychological challenge stress was mentioned by most of the participants this may be because of the economic condition in Zimbabwe. The study revealed that women with epilepsy use various methods as coping skills to the challenges they are facing. These coping skills include problem solving, emotion focused, religion, and marriage. Problem focused was the biggest coping skill being used by the respondents thus campaigning against. The study recommended education and awareness campaigns to reduce stigma and discrimination. It is also recommended that women should be made aware of the coping strategies and the ESF should ensure that people with epilepsy and their families have access to accurate clearly communicated education material and information. It is hoped that the findings of this study and the recommendations shall be useful in shaping support Services especially by epilepsy associations that have been at the forefront in the fight against the psychological and social challenges faced by women with epilepsy.