



IMPACT OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON CHILDREN WITH NEURODEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES AND THEIR FAMILIES SEEN IN A TERTIARY HOSPITAL IN QUEZON CITY



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INTRODUCTION

Children with neurodevelopmental disabilities (NDD) are among the vulnerable populations affected by COVID-19 pandemic as they are susceptible to stressors due to significant changes in routines and service access. This study investigated the impact of this pandemic on the physical and social-emotional well-being of children with NDD seen at the PCMC Neurodevelopmental Pediatrics Clinic, their parental well-being and their service use and satisfaction. This may assist in providing tailored interventions and supports during this period.

METHODS

This was a cross-sectional study done on caregivers of patients with NDD. A questionnaire was administered in person or via email to determine the sociodemographic profile and impact on the well-being and service use and satisfaction.

RESULTS

One hundred caregivers completed the questionnaire. The overall rating on the child's well-being (mean: 2.82, median: 3.00) and the parental well-being (mean: 2.87, median: 3.0) indicated a negative impact. Most caregivers reported disruption of their child's routine (88%), increase in their child's digital media use (88%) and mood lability (67%), and decrease in exercise (76%). The respondents' predominant concerns were the stability of living situation (87%), financial problems (93%), and balancing work with family responsibilities (63%). The overall rating on the service use (mean: 3.03, median: 3.00) denoted satisfaction with telehealth services. There was no significant difference in the impact scores based on socioeconomic status, caregiver education and employment, and location.

CONCLUSION and RECOMMENDATION

This pandemic negatively impacted the physical and socio-emotional well-being of children with NDD and their parents across all socio-demographic backgrounds. Despite this, caregivers reported positive experiences and satisfaction towards service use and accessibility, specifically telehealth services, hence continuation or adaptation of such services is recommended.

Keywords: Neurodevelopmental Pediatrics, impact, COVID-19, well-being, telehealth