

ABSTRACT

Assessment of a psychosocial intervention on caregivers of children and teenagers with severe disabilities: a randomized clinical trial

Introduction: Caring for a dependent family member carries a high risk for the caregiver, who is prone to experiencing diverse disorders. In 2017, Teleton introduced the program “*Cuidar Cuidándote*”, which offers in-home services for caregivers assisting dependent family members, providing support in activities to promote self-care, community involvement and respite care. **Objective:** To do an assessment of the effectiveness of “*Cuidar Cuidándote*” program of Teleton’s volunteer team, in terms of quality of life, work overload and social support for caregivers of children and young people with disabilities and severe functional impairment during 2017 and 2018. **Method:** A single-blind randomized experimental study to assess the psychosocial intervention in 25 caregivers of children and teenagers with severe disabilities, users of Instituto Teletón -Santiago. Caregivers were separated in two groups: an experimental group that participated in the “*Cuidar Cuidándote*” program including 13 home visits, and a control group that received no home visits. The effectiveness of the intervention was measured through different tests, such as quality of life, work overload, and social support as perceived before and after the intervention. **Results:** A statistically significant reduction in caregiver work overload (average of 11.6 points on the Zarit Scale) was observed in the group of caregivers that received the home visits. No significant differences were observed in terms of social support and quality of life. **Conclusion:** This program achieves a reduction in the level of work overload for caregivers of children and teenagers with severe disabilities.

Key words: Disabilities; dependent; informal care; psychosocial intervention; support.