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GENDER DIFFERENCES IN FAMILY BURDEN EXPERIENCED BY CAREGIVERS TO PEOPLE WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY

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Background: The term 'family burden' has been introduced to describe the adverse consequences of life with severely disturbed psychiatric patients. Its use has been extended to people with intellectual disability (ID). Literature has established a distinction between the intensity of worry and appraisals experienced by caregivers (subjective burden) and the real amount of resources (time, money, health, etc.) spent on the care (objective burden).

Aims: To compare the possible effect of gender on the burden experienced by a group of caregivers to people with ID in Spain.

Methodology: 179 adults with intellectual disability clients of the Carmen Pardo-Valcarce Foundation's sheltered workshop in Madrid (Spain) were asked to participate in the present study along with their main caregivers. Burden experienced by caregivers was assessed with the ECFOs-II / SOFBI-II scale (*Entrevista de Carga Familiar Objetiva y Subjetiva / Objective and Subjective Family Burden Interview*). The tool has been validated for people with ID. It has an introductory section plus 8 modules which assess different domains of burden.

Results: Only two modules of the scale showed significant differences depending on the gender of the user. These modules refer to the need of assistance in everyday activities and motives for concern for the caregiver ($p < 0.05$).

Discussion: In overall terms, caregivers experience the same level of burden when caring either for a son or for a daughter with ID. However, gender differences arise when considering specific domains, showing that social stereotypes can account for a higher level of subjective burden associated to female gender.