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Grandmother Kinship Care Providers: Predictors of Elevated Psychological Distress

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**Grandmother Kinship Care Providers: Predictors of Elevated Psychological Distress**

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**Methods**

**Participants**

- 516 African American grandmothers raising one or more grandchildren
- Mean age: 56.5 years (range 35 to 83)
- Less than high school education: 41.7%
- Currently married: 19.7%
- Raising an average of 2.4 children

**Measures**

- Brief Symptom Index
- Child Behavior Checklist
- Family Resource Scale
- Family Support Scale
- Short Form General Health Survey

**Analyses**

- Descriptive statistics
- Hierarchical multiple regression

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**Results**

**Psychological Distress Scores**

- 26% scored in clinical range (T ≥ 63) based on General Severity Index (GSI)
- 38.8% scored in clinical range based on two or more subscales (T ≥ 63)

**Predictors of Psychological Distress**

- Externalizing child behaviors
- Internalizing child behaviors
- Physical health
- Family resources

**Nonpredictors**

- Family social support

**Regression Summary Statistics:**

- Model predicted 33% of total variance
- \( R^2 = .33, F(11,503)= 22.46, p < .001 \)

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**Discussion**

**Summary and Implications**

- Almost 40% of kinship caregivers scored in clinical range for psychological distress
- Child behavior problems, diminished health, and lack of family resources were strongest predictors of caregiver distress
- Behavioral interventions are needed for both the grandchildren and grandmothers
- Caregivers need strategies for coping with traumatized children
- Physical health problems of kinship care providers need to be addressed
- Public policy should address the myriad needs of kinship care providers

**Limitations**

- Heterogeneity of sample in regard to race-ethnicity and urban setting
- Lack of comparison group
- Reliance on a single informant