Grandmother Kinship Care Providers: Predictors of Elevated Psychological Distress

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Recommended Citation
Whitley, Deborah M., "Grandmother Kinship Care Providers: Predictors of Elevated Psychological Distress" (2012). SW Publications. 32.
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Method
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

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
- \( R^2 = .33, F(11,503) = 22.46, p < .001 \)

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