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Title: Health status and coping skills of carers of patients receiving home oxygen therapy for respiratory diseases

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Body: Introduction: Carer burden is well-documented for a range of chronic diseases. Burdens for those who care for people with chronic respiratory diseases (CRD) requiring home oxygen therapy (HOT) have not been reported but would be expected to have a similarly high burden. Methods: Consecutive patient-carer dyads were enrolled over three years from 3 metropolitan hospitals if the patient was receiving HOT for a CRD. Baseline demographic observations and validated questionnaires were collected for Carers: health-related quality of life with Short Form-36 (SF36); Self-Esteem (SE) and Mastery (MS) Scales; Anticipated & Received Social Support (ARSS) and Carer Overload (CO) Scales, and Experiences and Impacts of Fatigue Scale (ICFS). Results: All measures were completed by all 197 carers enrolled.: Score results are expressed as mean;SD. Most (68.5%) were female and married (88.3%). Their mean age (67;12 yrs) was significantly lower than their patient (74.5 9 yrs) ($p < 0.001$). Carer SF-36 dimension scores were similar to normative values for age and gender. They had high SE (43.0;5.8) and MS (60.9;), had no perceived overload (7.9; 2.5), and were not unduly fatigued. Conclusions: In this population, patients receiving HOT have carers (mostly marital partners) who generally perceive little undue burden, either physically or emotionally. Funded by an Australian NHMRC Project Grant.