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Mental Health of Caregiving Grandparents

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Purpose
To assess the mental health of full-time custodial grandparents as compared with part-time caregiving grandparents.

Methods
Conceptual Framework: Pender’s Health Promotion Model
Comparative Descriptive Design
Sample:
- 11 frontier grandparents
  (5 grandfathers & 6 grandmothers)
  - 6 full-time custodial
  - 5 part-time caregiving
Instrument:
SF-36 Health Survey (composite mental health score)
Analysis:
Non-parametric Mann-Whitney U

Background
Grandparents are stepping up to help raise their grandchildren while:
- Both parents hold two or more jobs
- Divorce rates are increasing
- Single parents are working outside of the home
- Substance abuse &/or child neglect /abuse are present

Mental health stressors:
- Strained relationships with adult children
- Responsibility of raising another family at an increased age
- Legal issues with adult children

Previous research suggests that caregiving grandparents may have lower levels of mental health.

Results
No statistically significant difference in mean mental health scores between caregiver groups

(range = 45 - 60, norm = 50)

Implications
Limitations
- Small sample size

Findings suggest
- Frontier grandparents’ mental health is higher than the norm
- No difference between full-time & part-time caregiving grandparents’ mental health

Differs with previous grandparent & rural/frontier research

Caregiving may promote mental health in frontier grandparents

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