Abstract

Background: Despite depression being a common problem among nonprofessional caregivers, no studies of prevention of depression targeting this population exist in the literature. The studies of indicated prevention of depression aim of this study was to assess the efficacy of a problem-solving intervention in preventing clinical depression in a sample of female caregivers. Method: A controlled randomized trial was conducted among 173 participants (mean age 53.9 years), 89 of whom were randomized to the intervention group and 84 (controls) to usual care. The intervention comprised five weekly 90-minute group sessions. Results: At post-treatment, depression symptoms in the intervention group had remitted significantly more than in the control group, with a large effect size (d = 1.54). The proportion of participants showing clinically significant improvement was significantly larger in the intervention group (80.9% vs. 11.9% among controls), and fewer intervention-group participants had progressed to clinical depression during the study period (4.5% vs. 13.1% among controls). The intervention group also exhibited a significantly greater reduction in emotional distress and caregiver burden than the control group. Conclusions: These findings attest to the short-term efficacy of the intervention.

Keywords
Depression, nonprofessional caregiver, indicated prevention, therapy, problem solving.