

# Phenomenological explanation of women's lived experience with spouses with mental disorders

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## Abstract

**Context:** The spouse has a very important role to play in increasing the emotional and supportive resources of the family as well as in increasing patient adjustment. Therefore, understanding their experiences can lead the health-care system to the improvement of effective care and support.

**Aims:** This study was conducted to the explanation of the lived experiences of women with spouses with mental illness.

**Settings and Design:** This qualitative study was carried out using the van Manen phenomenology method.

**Materials and Methods:** Ten women were participated by purposeful sampling. Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews, observation, and Memo.

**Statistical Analysis Used:** To analyze data, six-step method of "Van Manen" was used.

**Results:** The results of life with a mentally impaired spouse include the main theme of "frustration" that includes four subthemes of "gradual extinction", "disappointment", "forgotten", and "financial disconnection". The gradual extinction consists of three subcategories: "role relocation", "self-neglect", and "early aging". Disappointment consisting of four subcategories "misery", "obligate life", disturbance and distress" and "loneliness". Forgotten consists of three subcategories: "not being comprehensive of treatment system", "isolation and seclusion", and "lack of a support". Financial disconnection includes three sub-categories: "lack of governmental support", "economic disturbance of the family", and "working of woman and the children".

**Conclusions:** Participants in this research showed a lack of knowledge about dealing with the patient as well as the lack of attention to individual problems. Families expressed the need for effective support due to the status of women.

**Keywords:** Lived experiences, Mental disorders, Phenomenology, Qualitative research, Spouse, Van Menen

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