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PRAPAWADEE SUPUCKWANICH : MENTAL HEALTH AND  
CARING BEHAVIORS OF CAREGIVERS OF CHILDREN WITH AUTISM.  
THESIS ADVISORS : YAJAI SITTHIMONGKOL, Ph.D., JARUWAN T.SKUL,  
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The purposes of this descriptive study were to examine the mental health and caring behaviors of caregivers of children with autism. The subjects consisted of 100 caregivers of children with autism who brought their children to the outpatient clinic at Yuwaprasart Withayopatum Child Psychiatric Hospital. The General Health Questionnaire-28 (Thai-version), developed by Goldberg and translated into Thai language by Tana Nilchaigovit and his colleagues and the Caring Behaviors of Caregivers of Children with Autism Questionnaire, developed by the researcher, were used for data collection. The data were analyzed by mean and percentage and the relationship between mental health and caring behaviors was analyzed by the Chi-Square test.

The results showed that 73.0 percent of the subjects were persons who had a normal health. They were persons who did not have somatic symptoms, anxiety, insomnia, social dysfunction, or severe depression. Meanwhile 27.0 percent of the subjects were persons with potential psychiatric disorders. The subjects reported their caring behaviors at a high level with percentage of mean scores 82.56. The result also showed that mental health was related to caring behaviors of caregivers of children with autism at a significant level ( $\chi^2 = 15.16$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). These findings suggested that nurses should promote mental health of the caregivers so that the children with autism would be cared appropriately.