

Background: Admission of a child to the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU) can create high parental and other companions psychological problems. Many factors contribute in a negative way to this abnormality. Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale (HADS) has been used to help physicians to identify these care givers at risk and address contributing factors.

Methods: The HADS has been administered to 42 care givers (26 in PICU and 16 as a control group in a general pediatric ward) in Babylon Gynecology and Children Teaching Hospital after their staying in hospital for 14 days. Factors which may have an effect on psychological status have been studied.

Results: Fifteen care givers (57.7%) show depression and anxiety in the range of (11-21) according to HADS compared to only 2 (12.5%) of the control group $p < 0.05$. All care givers think their patients are in pain and all complained of noise in the PICU as causes of their distress. Twenty four patients were under ventilator, fourteen care givers (93.3%) fall in the (11-21) range according to HADS..

Conclusion: Care givers in the PICU were at more risk of psychological stress compared to the control group and there are stressful factors playing a significant role in aggravating this abnormality.