
PSYCHOEDUCATION IN BIPOLAR PATIENTS: DOES IT HELP PREVENTING HOSPITALIZATION? A REVIEW OF THE PROGRAM DONE IN A PORTUGUESE PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL

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Introduction: in bipolar disorder, psychoeducation has already been shown as a helpful tool to make patients more aware of their disorder and helping them to develop skills towards prevention and early intervention, therefore preventing relapses requiring hospitalization.

Objectives: to understand if our psychoeducation program helped to prevent new hospitalizations.

Methods: analysis of the medical records of all patients who had gone and concluded the program, from 2008 to 2012, measuring new admissions and which type of decompensations they had upon their hospitalizations, prior and after undergoing the program.

Results: 57 patients attended the program (48 female, 9 male); average age of 42.7 years old; 41 of them had already had one prior episode requiring hospitalization (70.23% with mania, 19.08% with depression, and 10.69% with a mixed episode). After psychoeducation, none of the patients who had never been hospitalized was admitted; 29.27% of the previously hospitalized (21.05% of the total) required one or more (62.50% with mania, 18.75% with depression, and 18.75% with a mixed episode). Only one new admission was needed to 75% of these patients. 25% of the re-admissions occurred in the same year of the program, all of them related to suspension of the medication.

Conclusions: our results converge with other publications. Psychoeducation does, indeed, seem to be a helpful way to prevent hospitalization, integrated in an individualized therapeutic plan. More efforts must be put to not only to accept more patients, but also to prevent new decompensations, possibly by starting the program right during the patient's hospitalization.