

Schizophrenic Patients' Families Psycho-Education: Outcomes on Patients Quality of Life and Disease Relapse Rate

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Abstract:

Background: Reintegration of schizophrenic patients and its effect on their quality of life represent a major challenge facing schizophrenia treatment modalities. The nature of psychiatric illness requires an appropriate orientation of the patients' family members about the disease nature and the treatment requirements. Lack of such knowledge will negatively influence patients' quality of life and the disease relapse rate.

Objective: To introduce and evaluate the newly developed psycho – educational program on treatment outcomes for schizophrenic patients.

Subjects and Methods : Controlled health intervention was conducted among 2 groups of schizophrenic patients each consisting of 30 randomly selected patients. The parents of the first group (the trial group) are subjected to a psycho-educational program while those of the second group (control group) were not. The two groups were followed up for 18 months to detect the disease relapse rate among patients. Also, the effect of the psycho-educational program on the parents knowledge and the patients' quality of life were assessed using a pre-post evaluation questionnaires.

Results: The effect of the developed program was evidenced by the lower relapse rate (13.3%) among the intervention group compared to that of the control group (40%). Also the parents, knowledge scores as well as the patients' quality of life scores among various domains were significantly higher for the intervention group compared to the control group.

Conclusion of recommendations: Both the schizophrenic patients and their parents benefited from the application of the developed psycho-educational program. Introduction of this program into the schizophrenic treatment modality will have its positive reflection on the patients quality of life and the disease relapse rate.

Introduction

Stigma against people with mental illness is universal. Its impact is fundamentally social and can be devastating. Although psychiatric stigma has long been recognized to affect the treatment and prevention of schizophrenia and most other mental disorders adversely, robust empirical studies of the stigma of schizophrenic patients have been sparse, especially in the developing countries, where, ironically, the stigmatization of mental problems is particularly severe (Kleinman and Cohen, 1997). Many people with severe mental illness are frequently and repeatedly hospitalized due to poor compliance with treatment. Many patients feel stigmatized by their illness and may deny its existence,

which ultimately increase non-compliance. This issue is even more of a problem when people are living in the community and is often related to adverse effects of medication as well as a lack of adequate knowledge about medication (Antai-Otong, 1989). Psycho-education may be defined as the education of a person with psychiatric disorder in subject areas that serve the goals of treatment and rehabilitation. The terms "patient education", "Patient teaching" and "Patient instruction" have also been used for this process. All imply that there is a focus on knowledge. Education is a gradual process by which a person gains knowledge and understanding through learning.