

P-207 - COPING STRATEGIES OF RELATIVES OF PATIENTS WITH BIPOLAR I DISORDER: A STUDY IN 11 ITALIAN MENTAL HEALTH CENTRES

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Coping strategies defined as the responses that individuals employ to deal with psychological stress or to react to illness in relatives, can be either emotion-focused or problem-oriented. These strategies adopted by relatives to cope with patients suffering from schizophrenia have been deeply explored, while only few data are available on coping strategies adopted by relatives of patients with affective disorders.

This study, funded by the Italian Ministry of Health and coordinated by the Department of Psychiatry of the University of Naples SUN, aims to evaluate coping strategies in relatives of patients with bipolar disorder.

Eleven mental health centers have been invited to participate in the study. Coping strategies have been evaluated by the Family Coping Questionnaire (FCQ), whose scores range from 1 (=never) to 4 (=always).

One hundred fifty-two relatives have been recruited. They are predominantly female (59%), with 52 (± 13.4) years of age and 10 (± 3.9) years of education.

Relatives tend to use emotion-focused strategies rather than problem-oriented ones. In particular, among the former those most frequently reported are collusion (2.1 ± 0.4), coercive behaviors (2.2 ± 0.4) and spiritual help (2.0 ± 1.1).

Problem-oriented coping strategies more frequently reported are positive communication (3.1 ± 0.5), patient's social involvement (3.0 ± 0.7) and request for information (2.4 ± 1.5).

In order to improve coping strategies of relatives of patients with bipolar disorder, our research team is now conducting a study to facilitate the implementation of a psychoeducational family intervention in routine conditions.