

S29-01 - FAMILY PSYCHOEDUCATION FOR BIPOLAR DISORDER

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Introduction: Every mood episode is a stressful event for the whole family. Caregivers of bipolar patients experience a significant burden. Similarly, psychosocial stressors play a negative role in the illness outcome. In recent years, several non-pharmacologic interventions have shown prophylactic efficacy when added to pharmacotherapy.

Objectives: To highlight the need to include the family in the treatment of bipolar patients; to present the efficacy of a group psychoeducation focused on the relatives of bipolar patients; to determine which patients are more likely to benefit from caregiver psychoeducation.

Methods: 113 medicated euthymic bipolar outpatients were selected for a 15-month randomized controlled trial about the efficacy of caregivers group psychoeducation.

Results: Caregiver psychoeducation reduced subjective burden of the relatives and prevented recurrences of the patients, particularly (hypo)mania. The data also highlighted the need to introduce the intervention as soon as possible.

Conclusions: Family psychoeducation has a positive impact on caregivers and also on the course of the illness, stressing the participation of relatives as an important part in the therapeutic approach of bipolar disorder.