
STRENGTHS AND DIFFICULTIES QUESTIONNAIRE (SDQ): INTERFACE BETWEEN CHILD AND ADOLESCENT PSYCHIATRY AND PRIMARY CARE

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Introduction: Since about 30% of children and adolescents attending primary care and pediatric outpatient departments have psychiatric disorders that cause significant distress and social impairment, the proper functioning of National Health System assumes a determinant role on promoting early detection and intervening in the prevention of mental illnesses which can almost only be done through an efficient matching between primary care and hospital care.

Objectives: This paper aims to characterize the pediatric population hospitalized sent by their general practitioners to our outpatient clinic, on a level III Pediatric Hospital, evaluating the existence of psychopathology.

Methods: Retrospective analyses of 309 cases, at their first appointment on our outpatient clinic from June 2002 to March 2013. Self-reported and parent-reported symptoms of mental health problems and associated impairment were identified by the extended version of the strengths and difficulties questionnaire (SDQ) in children and adolescents.

Results: During 10 years, 185 male (45,95% 4-10 years; 54,05% 11-17 years) and 124 female (50,0% on each age group) were evaluated. Eighty-four percent of cases, scored for 'any psychiatric disorder'. Correlation between parent-reported and self-reported data was found, slightly higher for male gender. Pronounced divergences were found regarding child and adolescents' perception and their parents, concerning everyday life difficulties and hyperactivity scores, that is also valid for age group and gender. Total scores: emotional symptoms (51,8%), conduct problems (58,3%), hyperactivity score (59,2%).

Conclusions: We observed a positive impact of primary care medicine on referral network since the majority of the evaluated children and adolescents had psychopathology.