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UTILITY OF PERSONALITY MEASUREMENT IN THE RECOVERY FROM SURGERY

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Objectives: The aim of this study was to assess the impact of different psychological and/or biological effects in the recovery from surgery.

Methods: The sample was composed of 42 patients waiting for a surgical intervention. Patients with cognitive impairment were removed from the sample. Prior to surgical intervention (48 to 72 hours), patients were administered the Millon Clinical Multiaxial Inventory-II (Millon, 1986) and salivary cortisol were measured 24 hours before surgery. Following surgical intervention, recovery was coded as good or poor accordingly to Moix et al's criteria (1995). Dietary intake, resting and sleeping hours, as well as the existence of fever, perceived pain and related surgery complications were daily registered and controlled for.

Results: The cortisol values were increased in patients with high score in Histrionic Scale ($t = 2.10$, $p = 0.043$). There was a significant relation between personality, cortisol and recovery. The patients with low score in Dependent Scale ($t = 2.33$, $p = 0.029$), Histrionic Scale ($t = 2.51$, $p = 0.020$), Alcohol Dependence Scale ($t = 2.01$, $p = 0.049$), Drug Dependence Scale ($t = 2.08$, $p = 0.050$) and cortisol show better recovery from surgery.

Conclusion: The results of this study indicate that psychological factors and levels of cortisol may have a critical role in post-operative recovery. Taking these data into account, it seems necessary to assess psychopathology on a regular basis in all the patients waiting for surgically interventions.