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RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERCEIVED FAMILY FUNCTIONING AND RECOVERY FROM SURGERY

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Objective: The aim of the study was to assess the impact of several psychological and/or biological variables in the recovery from surgery.

Methods: The selected sample was composed of 42 patients (age range: 25-70) admitted for surgical treatment to a University Hospital. The patients who presented impaired cognitive functioning were excluded from the study. Prior to surgical intervention (48 to 72 hours), patients were administered the Family Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation Scale (FACES-II). Salivary cortisol was 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 time, fever, perceived pain and surgery-related complications were assessed on a daily basis.

Results: Significant relationships between better recovery, family cohesion and salivary cortisol level were found. The patients with lower scores in the cohesion dimension of the FACES-II and higher cortisol levels had more complications during the recovery phase ($F = 10.96, p = 0.006$).

Conclusions: Our results suggest that social support (family cohesion) and the activity of the hypothalamus-pituitary-adrenal axis (cortisol levels) can have a significant influence on postoperative recovery. Taking these data into account, it would be suitable to assess psychopathology and social support in patients waiting for surgically interventions.