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PSYCHOEDUCATION IN BIPOLAR DISORDER: A CLINICAL PERSPECTIVE

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Background: Bipolar disorder is a chronic, recurrent and debilitating mood disorder with a major impact on several aspects of everyday life. Although pharmacotherapy plays a central role in bipolar disorder treatment, psychosocial interventions are essential to a more complete and successful treatment.

Aims: To present a psychoeducation program for bipolar patients runned in a Portuguese psychiatric hospital - Hospital de Magalhães Lemos, Oporto. To review the impact of psychoeducative measures on bipolar patients.

Methods: A psychoeducative program for bipolar patients was developed and adapted, based on the Barcelona Bipolar Disorders Program's experience. The psychoeducative program was applied to bipolar patients as an adjuvant of maintenance treatment.

Results: Fifteen sessions were runned during 15 weeks. Twelve patients were recruited to integrate the psychoeducative group. The sessions addressed several topics including information about the illness, early detection of prodromal symptoms and symptoms management, stress management and the importance of maintaining routines.

Conclusions: The best treatment available for patients with bipolar disorder includes, along with the pharmacological treatment, psychosocial interventions aimed to target issues as early identification of prodromal symptoms, coping skills, medication adherence and understanding of the disorder. This broader approach of bipolar disorder treatment has proved to be efficient in reducing relapse rates, and improving patients' feelings of self-efficacy and quality of life.