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CRISIS TREATMENTS: IMPROVEMENTS IN SYMPTOMATIC, DEFENSE MECHANISMS, RECOVERY STYLE AND SOCIAL FUNCTIONING

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The challenge in crisis intervention is to seize the potential of change while giving the patients enough support and security as well as maintaining social integration. Crisis Intervention Centers (CIC) provide an alternative to psychiatric hospitalization for patients that are treated in an affiliated outpatient structure.

The aim of this study was to verify the short term effects of a brief (6 weeks) intensive crisis psychodynamic oriented treatment including individual and group therapy associated with pharmacotherapy.

One hundred and fourteen middle age ($n=41$ years, $SD= 11.7$) patients were included: 68 women and 46 men with disorders like depression (75.4%), anxiety (18.4%) or others (6.2%) according to CIM-10. They were administered measures of psychopathology (BPRS 4.0 and SCL-90 R), defense mechanisms (DSQ-40), global functioning (GAF) and recovery style (RSQ) at intake and 2 weeks after discharge.

At endpoint, a statistical significant reduction in the severity of symptoms was found in all variables except for hostility and phobic dimensions of SCL-90 R. This was associated with significant improvements in recovery style scores, global functioning and a shifting towards more mature defense mechanisms. None of the improvements were related to gender.

These findings provide clear evidence of the effectiveness of brief psychodynamic oriented crisis interventions in specific units like CIC. Further research is needed to clarify whether the improvements remain stable on the long run and whether crisis treatments pave the way for future psychotherapeutic treatments.