Hikikomori and Intercultural Manifestations: a Bibliografic Review

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INTRODUCTION

"Hikikomori" is known since the 80s and was described by Saito in 1998 as a different clinical picture from any current diagnostic category, being social withdrawal the most important aspect. Young hikikomoris, more than a million in Japan (Teo2010), withdraw in their room for at least six months, interrupting communication with the outside world. This picture was described by many international scholars (Watts 2002; Zielenzinger 2008; Teo 2010; Piotti et al.2014). Part of international literature, after DSMIV-TR, defined hikikomori as a culture-bound syndrome (Agugliaetal.,2010). However, recently similar cases were described in different contexts, both in Asia and Western world (Kato et al.,2012), highlighting peculiar clinical signs influenced by the context, although maintaining a common matrix referred to Saito framework.

AIMS

This literature review aims to gather descriptions of hikikomori in different cultures, to identify cross-cultural variables on which the phenomenon is based and to analyse any differences in clinical manifestations.

METHODS

Eighty-two articles which contained 'hikikomori" in the title or abstract were reviewed and searched using online databases (PsycINFO, PubMed, googleschoolar)

RESULTS

The scientific literature was divided by year of publication and by three phases:

1. The articles are mostly Japanese

2. Western articles, referring to Japanese contexts

3. The Hikikomoriconcept isclosely related tosocial withdrawal (sources from many countries).

CONCLUSION
The literature shows a tendency to consider hikikomori a phenomenon which exceeds cultural context (although influenced by it), rather than a culturally characterized syndrome.