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GROUP THERAPY DURING THE POST-SURGERY PERIOD FOR BARIATRIC PATIENTS FROM A PUBLIC SERVICE IN THE SOUTHEAST BRAZIL: MAIN ASPECTS

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Introduction: With the worldwide increase of severe obesity, the demand for and performance of bariatric surgery has increased.

Objective: To show the importance of the group therapy approach in the research and treatment of the surgery's psychological consequences.

Method: Clinical method of research, through weekly open therapeutic groups with patients that have undergone bariatric surgery.

Results: After the surgery the patients: feel empty, which leads them to search for alternative routes to give their lives meaning, some healthy, such as exercising intensely, others unhealthy, such as addictions, especially the consumption of alcohol; they are divided between the control of impulses sensation that the surgery provides and the food temptation that generates anguish, conflicts and fears of failing and gaining weight again; they experience the presence of new identity elements that arise with the weight loss and that lead to feelings of strangeness in relation to themselves and their personality; they are not stigmatized anymore and assume new social roles, with an important improvement of their self-esteem and social functioning; they may experience conflicts that are hard to handle in parental and marital relationships, especially due to jealousy and competitiveness.

Conclusions: Despite the undeniable benefits that the bariatric surgery provides to the patients, psychological conflicts arise. The bariatric surgery is a procedure that causes, in addition to massive weight loss, deep changes in the patients' psychic structure that, if well conducted in what concerns psychotherapy, lead to a significant improvement of the patient's life quality.