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COGNITIVE BEHAVIORAL THERAPY FOCUSED UPON COMMUNICATIONAL SKILLS ENHANCEMENT IN ANOREXIA NERVOSA- A CASE SERIES

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Introduction: Anorexia nervosa (AN) has been approached from multiple medical, social and psychological perspectives, but it still stands as a major challenge for the clinician, due to its resistance to treatment, low therapeutic compliance and severe complications.

Objective: To assess the efficacy of an interpersonal focused cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) in patients diagnosed with AN.

Methods: We enrolled in 12 weeks, 3 sessions a week, CBT program a number of three patients, females, admitted successively in our departments, diagnosed with AN, who didn't have previously any kind of psychotherapy. The first patient was 22, diagnosed with AN-restricting type, had a BMI of 14.5 and a score on Eating Attitudes Test (EAT) of 34. The second patient was 19, presented AN-binge eating-purging, had a BMI of 14 and an EAT score of 35. The third patient was 25, had also AN-binge eating-purging, a BMI of 15 and an EAT score of 32.

Results: The first two patients responded well to the CBT program, but the first signs of recovery (EAT decreases of at least 5 points and increases of at least 1 unit on BMI) appeared after 10 weeks (15 sessions). The third patient discontinued rather fast the psychological treatment. The follow up (12 weeks after endpoint) showed relapse in one CBT-treated patient and a severe status of the patient that discontinued psychotherapy.

Conclusion: The CBT focused on communicational skills enhancement is beneficial in patients with AN, but responses appear rather late and need to be boosted by frequent follow-up sessions.