

P03-372

EVOLUTION OF PATIENTS WHO UNDERWENT ELECTROCONVULSIVE THERAPY (ECT) IN A BRAZILIAN GENERAL HOSPITAL FROM 1993 TO 2007

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Objectives: To determine the outcome of patients who underwent ECT in a Brazilian General Hospital between 1993 and 2007.

Methods: Telephone contact with all patients (or their relatives) who were submitted to ECT during psychiatric hospitalization in HC-Unicamp-Brazil. Data were compiled for statistical analysis at SPSS.

Results: There were 53 successful telephone contacts (33.9% of 153 patients who underwent ECT). Losses were due to changes of telephones/addresses. No refuses occurred. The mean time between the procedure and the contact was 55.4 months (3-170). Twenty patients (37.3%) and 37 relatives (69.8%) were interviewed. Most were women (60.4% n=32), 4 were inpatients by the occasion of the call and 4 died. The mean age was 42.9 ± 19.4 . The assessments of current mental state by patients were: excellent in 5-9.4% cases, good in 12-22.6%, poor in 2-3.8%. The evaluation by family members was: excellent in 11-20.8% cases, good in 11-20.8%, poor in 7-13.2% and very poor in 5-9.4%. In 42 cases (79.2%) the patient was still under psychiatric treatment (taking psychotropic medication in 39-73.6%). In 28 cases (54%) there was need for new admission in a psychiatric inpatient ward. In 38 cases (74%) the patient reported knowing that he/she had undergone ECT, and only in 5 cases (9.4%) there was a lasting side effect of treatment reported, which was change in memory.

Conclusions: Data of the evolution of patients corroborate the importance of treatment with ECT for severe mental disorders, and also shows the low rate of long-term complications related to the procedure.