

Effectiveness of Group Intervention for Caregivers of Persons with First Episode Psychosis

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Introduction: Family interventions in psychosis are well established through systematic reviews and meta-analysis of outcome studies. Such reviews report that family intervention might reduce the risk of relapse, benefits in general social functioning, and reduction in levels of expressed emotion and family burden. But most previous studies are conducted in caregivers with chronic schizophrenia. Thus, the effects of family interventions in the early stages are largely unknown.

Aim and objectives: The study evaluated the effectiveness of group intervention in improving social support and reduction in expressed emotion among caregivers of first episode psychosis.

Methods: Using a quasi-experimental comparison group design, we evaluated the effectiveness of an add-on seven sessions of group interventions with treatment as usual group among 59 caregivers of first episode psychosis. Intervention included support, psycho-education, and communication components. The samples were recruited during participants' inpatient stay at the hospital. Follow-up assessments were carried out after one month and three months of interventions. Standardized instruments were used to measure the outcomes. Descriptive and inferential statistics were applied to the data.

Results: Caregivers in group intervention reported significant reduction in expressed emotion ($p < .007$) and improvements in social support ($p < .002$) in one month follow-up assessment. But these benefits were not sustained at three months follow-ups. Overall, both groups showed significant changes on outcome variables over the time period.

Conclusion: Group intervention was effective for improving caregivers' social support and reducing expressed emotion. Intervention need to provide longer period to sustain the benefits.