

A program of social skills training in chronic schizophrenic patients

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The Egyptian Journal of Psychiatry (Print)

2003 v22 n1

Severe impairment of social functioning is one of the hallmarks of schizophrenia. This study was carried out to modify the maladaptive behaviors of chronic schizophrenic patients and to help the patients to learn, practice and develop the skills necessary to be effectively interacting with others. It was conducted on a sample of 30 chronic schizophrenic patients (24 males and 6 females, whose age ranged from 19 to 55 years) with an illness duration ranged from 2 to 14 years. Seven cases were disorganized schizophrenia, seven cases were undifferentiated schizophrenia, fifteen cases were paranoid schizophrenia and one case was catatonic schizophrenia. The patients were diagnosed according to DSM-IV (1994). They were subjected to nurse's observation rating scale (NORS), initiative rating scale (IRS), the brief psychiatric rating scale (BPRS) and group activities including psychotherapy group, reading newspaper group, rhythmic body movements group and physical exercise activities group. They were admitted for one month in the hospital, then followed up three times, every month after discharge. The patients score was improved significantly at the end of the program in all activities. A significant improvement was detected in IRS in all of its items except sleeping, in BPRS in all of its item except megalomania, in NORS in all schizophrenic groups except the disorganized group and in the psychotherapy groups in all items except in the attitude towards beer member. A significant improvement was also observed in the scores of other group activities, e.g. Reading newspaper, rhythmic body movements and physical exercise activity at the end of the program. Relevant conclusions as well as recommendations were presented.