Effectiveness of positive family interactions module on the expressed emotion of
the care givers and relapse of patients with schizophrenia: A prospective study in
a selected psychiatric inpatient facility, Mangalore

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: As schizophrenia tends to become chronic, the functional decline of
the patient leads to loss of social functioning, alters communication patterns in the
family, leads to occupational difficulties and puts burden in the family. This may
result in high levels of expressed emotion (hostile, critical and emotional over
involvement attitudes) in caregivers. Individuals with schizophrenia who return to
the families with high levels of expressed emotion are more likely to relapse. Family
psycho education programs are found to have significant influence on reduction of
expressed emotion in family members. The nurses who work round the clock with
patients are in best position to provide such interventions for caregivers as well as
the patients.

Methodology: A true experimental design was used for the study. The sample
consisted of 112 caregivers and their patients with schizophrenia from the in-patient
department of Father Muller Mental Health Centre, Mangalore. The subjects were
randomly assigned to Positive Family Interactions Module (PFIM) and Treatment as
usual (TAU) groups using a table of random numbers. The instruments for data
collection included baseline proforma for patients and caregivers, Level of Expressed
Emotion scale - Relative version (LEE) for caregivers, Positive and Negative
Syndrome Scale (PANSS), Medication Adherence Rating Scale (MARS), Presumptive
Stressful Life Events Scale (PSLES) and Tobacco Use Questionnaire for patients. The
intervention, Positive Family Interactions Module was administered to the
caregivers of patients with schizophrenia individually in eight sessions of one hour
duration over two weeks after the pre-interventional assessment. The data was
collected at admission and, one month, three months and six months after
intervention.

Results: The caregivers in PFIM and TAU groups were having high and very high
pre-interventional EE. At the end of 6 months, majority of caregivers in PFIM group
had low (51.0%) or very low (32.7%) EE whereas majority of caregivers in TAU
group had high (74.50%) EE. The mean difference of EE was statistically highly
significant (p=0.0001) in each time interval between PFIM and TAU groups from pre
interventional to 6 months. The mean difference was statistically significant (p<0.05)
in each time interval between PFIM and TAU groups in the four domains of EE. At
one month, the relapse rates of patients with schizophrenia were almost same in PFIM and TAU groups. The rate of relapse was higher at 3 & 6 months for TAU group compared to PFIM group. There was a statistically significant difference (p<0.05) in PANSS scores of patients between the groups at different time intervals except for at admission & one month. The domain wise difference in PANSS scores between both groups also were found to be statistically significant (p<0.05). There was a statistically significant difference (p<0.05) in the medication adherence scores of patients between PFIM and TAU groups at different time intervals from pre-interventional to 6 months. There was no significant difference observed in stressful life events and tobacco use of patients between both the groups at different time intervals. Expressed emotion, medication adherence and stressful life events emerged to be the predictors of relapse at 3 and 6 months. There was a significant association between age, education, religion, family income, marital status, relationship place of residence of caregivers and their expressed emotion. There was a significant association between EE of caregivers and type of antipsychotics taken by patients. A significant association of pre-interventional relapse of patients and their diagnoses and number of hospitalizations were obtained.

**Conclusions:** The findings of the present study showed that Positive Family Interactions Module was effective in reducing the expressed emotion of caregivers and relapse of patients with schizophrenia. Educating the family members of patients with schizophrenia on family interactions not only help them to cope better but also lead to more definite improvements in the clinical status and functioning of the patients.

**Key words:** Caregivers, Expressed emotion, Family intervention, Patients, Relapse, Schizophrenia, Positive Family Interactions Module