

Poster Exhibition (abstracts)

III/2

Patient and familial education by means of an interventional program - a new procedure for the prevention of relapse in schizophrenia.

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Patient and family education on schizophrenia is based on the empirically proven insight that schizophrenic disorders are strongly influenced by the specific familial atmosphere.

This insight has led to the development of specific strategies with interventional character, now well established as "Psychoedukation" .

This specific form of patient / family education has shown, independent of the type of intervention strategy, in all present studies, a reduction of psychotic relapse by 23% in a range of over up to eight years. ---

The program developed in our clinic, Psychoeducative Familyintervention (PEFI), is based on the concept of behavioral therapy , adapted to the specific needs of patients with schizophrenia and their family members. In our program, the usual educational resource is extended by teaching basic psychotherapeutic skills, thus furthering general familial communication. We thus not only merely instruct our patients and family members on coping with their disorder, on medical treatment etc, but we also develop strategies to prompt familial cohesion. Thus, the PEFI - Program is based on patient education, communication skills training, social skills training and problem solving skills training, and is comprised of 11 sessions, of which ten are held weekly. The eleventh meeting, the booster-session, takes place after six months.

PEFI has been implemented in our clinic since 1998. The program has, since the very beginning, been evaluated in cooperation with the Psychological Institute of the Technical University of Darmstadt. In the practical process, the role play has shown to be especially popular with the group members. The significant gain of knowledge and insight extends the 6 month duration of the program. The families gain, through the ten sessions, more trust and self confidence as regards to their problem solving qualities. This effect continuously grows during the entire program, to be even more effective after the program"s end. Within the family, a stronger familial security and bonding is formed. As to the psychotic relapse rate during the course of one year, our studies have shown, that the PEFI program reduces the rate from 60 % before the intervention to 19% after the intervention.

PEFI is a very effective instrument which can easily be implemented in the prevention of relapse in schizophrenia.