

THE ITINAD STUDY: PRELIMINARY RESULTS OF A PSYCHOEDUCATION PROGRAM FOR CAREGIVERS OF ALZHEIMER PATIENTS

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Introduction: Alzheimer's Disease (AD) surges as a major issue in public health, and so does quality of life of patient's informal caregivers, who are exposed to negative outcomes such as increasing psychological distress and burden, depression and anxiety, which are also often associated to a poor knowledge of the disease, of its symptoms and of patient's needs.

Objectives: The purpose of the ITINAD project is to demonstrate the effectiveness of a psychoeducational program in reducing the negative impact of caregivers' coping with an AD patient and in increasing the knowledge.

Methods: The study involved 185 caregivers from 10 Italian centers: 89 of them were assigned to the control group, while 96 belonged to the experimental group, which was submitted to a 12 sessions psychoeducational program that developed themes such as clinical aspects of the illness, relatives' roles and coping strategies. Socio-demographic data for the caregivers were analyzed, while the Hamilton Rating Scales were used to assess the symptoms of anxiety (HRSA) and depression (HRSD); the Psychological General Well-Being Index (PGWBI) measured psychological distress; the QPF (Familiar Issues Questionnaire) was used to evaluate caregivers' burden and their consciousness towards AD.

Results: Caregivers belonging to experimental group showed a significant decrease in anxiety ($p=0,00$) and depression ($p=0,00$); the program led also to a better self control in caregivers as shown by the PGWBI ($p=0,04$). The QPF demonstrated an improvement in AD's symptoms' management ($p=0,00$).

Conclusions: These findings suggest the utility of a psychoeducational group in preventing negative outcomes in AD's caregiver.