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PATIENTS' OPINION ON THE SMOKING HABIT AT A PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITALIZATION UNIT OF A GENERAL HOSPITAL

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Introduction: Mental patients constitute a vulnerable group for the smoking habit, with higher prevalence and addiction levels than in the general population. Free time at psychiatric institutions can contribute for hospitalized patients to smoke. Difficulties to control smoking during hospitalization include non-integration of anti-smoking strategies into service routines, disbelief in addiction treatments and the view of smoking as an instrument that appeases and facilitates social interaction.

Objective: Get to know patients' opinion on tobacco use during hospitalization and the smokers' addiction level.

Aims: Get to know the circumstance of the smoking habit during psychiatric hospitalization.

Method: Exploratory-descriptive quantitative and qualitative study, carried out at the Psychiatric Ward at Ribeirão Preto Medical School Hospital of the University of São Paulo, Brazil. A semistructured interview was applied to all subjects and the Fagerström questionnaire to the smokers.

Results: Out of 25 patients, 44% suffered from mood disorder and 28% from schizophrenia; 52% had been ill for ten years or more; 64% had been hospitalized between one and five times; 24% were smokers; 83.3% with a high addiction level. Most non-smokers agreed with a smoking prohibition in collective rooms, without privileges for mentally ill patients. The smokers were opposed to anti-smoking policies, but favorable to nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) during hospitalization.

Conclusion: These findings can support future research and permit suggestions on studies to assess the NRT used at this or other services, as well as the possibility for patients to give up smoking.