

YPSP01-08 - ARE PSYCHOPATHOLOGICAL SYMPTOMS IN PATIENTS WITH DEMENTIA RELATED TO STRESS PERCEPTION IN THE CAREGIVER?

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Objectives: To test the presence of significant correlations between psychopathological symptoms in patients with dementia and the stress perceived by the primary caregiver.

Methods: Primary caregivers of patients with a DSM-IV diagnosis of dementia admitted to the neuro-psycho-geriatric-rehabilitation ward of the private hospital "Villa Maria Luigia", Parma - Italy, between May and November 2008 were asked to take part in the study. The NPI scale (UCLA Neuropsychiatric Inventory - Cummings J.L. et al., 1994) and a socio-demographic data collection schedule were administered to the primary caregiver willing to be involved in the study.

Results: Only 30 of the 40 eligible subjects agreed to take part to the study (75%). 35 significant correlations (according to Spearman's Correlation Index) were found. Those most highly significant ($p < 0.001$) were between stress perception and the following NPI symptom categories: delirium, hallucination, agitation, euphoria, apathy, disinhibition, aberrant physical activity and sleep disorders.

Conclusions: The psychopathological symptoms found to contribute mostly to distress of caregivers were those most showy and disruptive of behaviour; other symptoms, such as anxiety, depression, irritability and eating disorders are better tolerated as considered normal consequences of ageism. Interventions addressed to caregivers should provide them with detailed and structured coping instruments. Clear, therefore, the need for all health professionals, to structure an intervention aimed at caregivers characterized by two different phases:

1. To provide more tools to recognize those disorders which don't emotionally involve them;
2. To give detailed, structured information useful to cope with these disorders in everyday life.