A hybrid effectiveness-implementation trial of wellness self-management program for patients with severe mental illness in an Italian day hospital setting

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Introduction Wellness self-management is an adaptation and expansion of the illness management and recovery, an internationally recognized best practice. WSM is a recovery-oriented, curriculum-based practice designed to help adults with severe mental health problems make decisions and take action to manage symptoms and improve their quality of life.

Objectives In the present study, the Italian translation of the WSM was implemented and validated. Moreover, the impact of its application in a day hospital setting on cognitive functions, psychopathology, personal resources and real-life functioning with respect to treatment as usual (TAU) was investigated.

Aims The study was aimed at assessing the effectiveness of a semi-structured version of WSM in a day hospital setting in patients with severe mental illness.

Methods Fourteen patients with a diagnosis of severe mental illness were recruited and randomly assigned to either WSM or TAU. WSM participants attended four 2-hour sessions per week for 1 month, including lessons selected on the basis of the goals of participants. Both groups received weekly planned treatment in the day-hospital setting and continued their pharmacotherapy.

Results The two groups of patients were comparable for age, education, cognitive functioning and psychopathological severity. WSM produced a significantly greater improvement in neurocognition, psychopathology, personal resources and real-life functioning with respect to TAU.

Conclusions Our findings confirm that poor PA in schizophrenia is associated with poorer illness outcome, and offer a further characterization of PA impact on different psychopathological and cognitive domains. They also suggest that poor early adjustment is a candidate endophenotype of schizophrenia, occurring in patients and their unaffected relatives.

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