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Psychodynamic day treatment programme for patients with schizophrenia spectrum disorders: Dynamics and predictors of therapeutic change

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Learning Goal:

The learning goal is to show how group psychodynamic programme may improve quality of life of patients with schizophrenia spectrum disorders.

Abstract Text:

Objectives. The purpose of this study was to test whether a psychodynamically based group psychotherapeutic programme might improve symptoms, social functions, or quality of life in patients with schizophrenia spectrum disorders and to investigate factors that might predict clinical improvement or dropouts from the programme.

Design

A quantitative prospective cohort study.

Methods

We have investigated 81 patients with schizophrenia spectrum disorders who participated in a 9-month psychodynamically based psychotherapeutic day programme. The patients were assessed at the beginning and end of the programme, and then at 1-year follow-up. The assessment included psychotic manifestations (HoNOS), quality of life (WHOQOL-BREF), demographic data, and daily doses of medication. 21 patients dropped out from the programme, and 46 patients succeeded in undergoing follow-up assessment.

Results

The psychotic manifestations (self-rating version of HoNOS) and quality of life measured with WHOQOL-BREF (domains of social relationships and environment) were significantly improved at the end of the programme and at follow-up. However, the manifestations on the version for external evaluators of HoNOS were improved only at follow-up. Years of psychiatric treatment, number of hospitalizations or suicide attempts, and experience of relationships with a partner were negatively related to clinical improvement, whereas symptom severity, current working, or study activities were related positively.

Conclusions

The results show that a group psychodynamic programme may improve the clinical status and quality of life of patients with schizophrenia spectrum disorders. This type of programme is more beneficial for patients with higher pre-treatment symptom severity and the presence of working or study activities.

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