

0471

**Title: "Coping": a measure positively correlated to the assessment of occupational therapy clinic regarding mental health in general hospitals**

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Introduction: the present study was inspired by the necessity of finding a device which could be applied in the short-run, managed from the very beginning and along the whole treatment and which would exhibit as much sensitiveness as possible concerning alterations in the perception of the patient, of their evolution all through the Occupational therapy process while a general hospital inpatient

Objective: identify coping strategies regarding inpatients' disease in university hospital wards and describe such strategies not only according to the OT therapeutic process, but also to the comprehension and acceptance of the disease on the part of the patient

Method: transversal study, records of mental health OT assistance to Gastro Clinic and Gastric Surgery inpatients [April - September 2008]. Every patient is assessed by an occupational therapist, a form is filled out - it includes data of all sorts: socio-demographic, clinical, on the comprehension of the disease and treatment, on acceptance and coping [classified as approach /avoidance]. The Occupational Functioning of Self-Evaluation scale - adapted to Brazilian Portuguese [Tedesco, 2007] - and the Vital Events and Coping Strategies scale - Coping [Savoia, 1995] - were used. Also, chi square and Fisher tests we used

Results: the collected data during two months [N=35] show [regardless of gender] a preponderance of patients with coping approach strategy [73,6%]; after being rightly informed by the medical team, most of the patients knew the name of the disease [85,7%] and the treatment that had been carried out [90,5%]; however, they could not fully understand what their pathology was [52,4%] or the changes in their everyday habits after hospitalization [80,9%]. The use of coping avoidance strategy in stressful situations was higher among patients who had not undergone occupational therapy during hospitalization [50%,  $\chi^2 = 8,8$ ; g.l.=;  $p < 0,05$ ] and the positive correlation for the OT interventions and coping, particularly regarding improvement in their abilities and interests [52%,  $\chi^2 = 9,2$ ; g.l.=1;  $p < 0,05$ ]

Conclusion: OT interventions in mental health help the coping strategies which avoid stressful situations and enhance the patient's adaptation to their medical condition and hospitalization.