

The Importance of Cooperation and Relative's Involvement in Combined Treatment for Eating Disorders: a Case Report

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Introduction: The importance of combined treatment of EDs is widely acknowledged. We describe the good outcome of a combined treatment in a 43 year old woman, affected by severe Anorexia Nervosa – Binge Purging (BMI 9.1), since early adolescence. She sought treatment only after giving birth to her second-born when she became aware of her illness. Despite intensive treatment (as an inpatient in hospitals and specialized rehabilitation centres, and in Day Hospital facilities), her condition gradually worsened, and her personal, social, working and family functioning was severely compromised (Global Assessment of Functioning Scale 35),

Methods: A multidisciplinary team including psychiatrist, psychotherapist, family psychotherapist, nutritionist, dietician, nurses was involved in treatment, working together to a common treatment strategy. The Psychiatrists role (psicopharmacology, therapeutic process, helping acknowledging and avoiding manipulation) and the nurses role (establishing a therapeutic relationship with the patient, assisting her during meals and supporting the overall therapeutic process), are discussed.

Results: A gradual psychopathologic and somatic improvement occurred across a 12-months period: she spent two months in a Psychiatry ward, four more months in a rehab centre and six months in an ED therapeutic community. She gained weight (BMI 21.4) and regained an excellent personal, social and family functioning. She returned to her husband (they previously separated), and the relationship with her daughters, who previously rejected her, improved (GAF 90).

Conclusions: The cooperation of the multidisciplinary equipe and the involvement of the patient's relatives succeeded in reducing anxiety, depression, dysmorphophobia and interrupting the manipulating attitudes typical of the illness.