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Anxiety and Expressed Emotion in a Sample of Obese Patients

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INTRODUCTION Expressed Emotion (EE) is a measure of the intensity of the affective family climate and plays a role in disease course and outcome. Especially in urban settings, obesity is a severe problem with serious implications as far as health risks are concerned. Having a high EE caregiver has been suggested to correlate with a worse treatment compliance in obese patients.

OBJECTIVES To measure level of EE, stressful events and anxiety in obese patients and their caregivers; to investigate the possible correlations between compliance with treatment and emotional temperature of families.

METHODS We have already recruited more than 150 obese patients and their caregivers. Assessment included: Level of Expressed Emotion Scale (LEE), one version for patients and one for relatives in order to evaluate 4 dimensions: intrusiveness, emotional response, attitude toward disease, tolerance and expectation; the Paykel's Interview for Recent Life Events; STAI Y1 concerning state anxiety and STAI Y2 concerning trait anxiety. Furthermore we collected demographic characteristics and BMI (Body Mass Index).

RESULTS Data collection and analyses are still ongoing. Preliminary results suggest a correlation between obesity and level of anxiety. We expect to find a correlation between level of EE and variation of BMI.

CONCLUSIONS Levels of EE and anxiety should be considered when planning treatment interventions to enhance compliance in obese patients and to support change in their life-style.