

Quality of life, burden and emotion regulation difficulties in relatives of Borderline Personality Disorder patients



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Introduction

Some mental disorders, including Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD), are product of an interaction between several factors such as genetics, neurobiology or psychosocial influences (Kulacaoglu & Kose, 2018). In reference to the psychosocial influences, families play an important role in the development of BPD, while at the same time the diagnosis and the symptomatology of this mental disorder creates stressful situations for the carers. A few studies (Bailey & Grenyer, 2014; Hoffman & Fruzzetti, 2007) indicate that families and carers of people with BPD report burden, impaired well-being, high levels of psychological distress and difficulties in emotion regulation. For this reason, some family interventions have been successfully applied to provide them with coping and social skills to build a solid family network (Hoffman et al., 2005).

The aim of this study is to describe a sample of relatives of people with BPD with regard to the variables of quality of life, burden and difficulties in emotion regulation. Moreover, the relation among these variables is also studied.

Method

Sample: 49 relatives of BPD patients participating in a study of the clinical center PREVI, with an average age of 55 years (range: 23-72,SD:10,743), sex: mostly woman (67,3 %); occupation: 31, 7 % skilled jobs; education level: 53,1 % higher education; civil status: 43,9 % married.

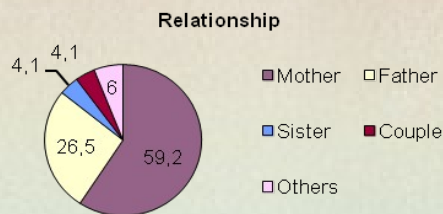


Figure 1: distribution of the type of relationship between relatives and patients.

Measures:

- Burden Assessment Scale (BAS): consisting of 19 items that capture both objective and subjective elements of burden.
- Quality of Life Index (QLI): it includes 10 items to assess different well-being domains.
- Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale (DERS): consisting of 28 items that assess the dimensions of emotional lack of control, rejection, interference, neglect and confusion.

Statistical analysis:

- Univariate analysis: average scores on each scale (BAS, QLI and DERS).
- Bivariate analysis: Pearson correlation coefficient between BAS and QLI scores, and between BAS and DERS scores.

Discussion

Results obtained in the BAS showed levels of burden above the average, while the results in the QLI and the DERS showed moderate levels of quality of life and moderate difficulties in emotion regulation, respectively. With regard to the relation among these variables, results showed that there was a significant and negative correlation between burden and quality of life. This could indicate that the responsibilities and worries that entail taking care of a person with BPD may affect one's living standards.

Moreover, a significant and positive correlation was found between burden and emotion regulation difficulties. This data show the influence of the emotion regulation in coping with stressful situations created by the relative's disorder.

By way of a summary, this study provide some evidences about the importance of taking account of families in the intervention process of BPD by giving them emotion regulation skills, reducing their burden and eventually improving their quality of life.

Results

	N	Min.	Max.	Average	SD
BAS	48	21	73	46,959	11,622
QLI	49	32	91	62,69	17,097
DERS	49	34	104	56,833	18,064

Table 1: descriptive results obtained in the BAS, the QLI and the DERS.

	QLI	DERS
BAS	-0,581 p<0,001	0,450 p<0,001

Table 2: correlation between levels of burden, quality of life and emotion regulation difficulties.

Resumen

El Trastorno Límite de la Personalidad (TLP) es un trastorno mental caracterizado por patrones dominantes de inestabilidad emocional, además de presentar alteraciones de la auto-imagen, inestabilidad en las relaciones interpersonales, una marcada impulsividad y conductas suicidas (ideación e intentos suicidas) causando una gran interferencia en la vida del individuo.

En el TLP intervienen varios factores, entre los cuales se encuentra la familia. Así, la familia juega un papel importante en la aparición y el desarrollo del trastorno, mientras que al mismo tiempo el diagnóstico de TLP y los síntomas asociados influyen en el estado de los familiares. Algunos estudios muestran niveles altos de carga, dificultades en la regulación emocional y un deterioro en el bienestar de los familiares de pacientes con TLP. El objetivo de este trabajo consistió en estudiar cuál era el nivel de carga y de dificultades en la regulación emocional en una muestra de 49 familiares de pacientes con TLP, así como determinar sus niveles de calidad de vida. Además, se estudió la posible relación entre estas variables.

Para llevar a cabo el estudio se utilizaron las escalas de Quality of Life Index (QLI), Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale (DERS) y Burden Assessment Scale (BAS).

Respecto a los resultados, se obtuvieron puntuaciones de carga por encima de la media, dificultades en regulación emocional moderadas y un nivel de calidad de vida también moderado.

Por otra parte, se obtuvo una relación significativa y negativa entre la carga y la calidad de vida, y una relación significativa y positiva entre las dificultades en la regulación emocional y la carga.

Estos datos aportan evidencias acerca de la importancia de tener en cuenta a las familias en los procesos de intervención del TLP para mejorar tanto el bienestar de los pacientes como el de sus familiares.

Abstract

Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD) is a mental disorder characterized by dominant patterns of emotional instability, in addition to presenting alterations of self-image, instability in interpersonal relationships, marked impulsiveness and suicidal behaviors (suicidal ideation and attempts) causing a great interference in the life of the individual.

There are several factors involved in BPD, including the family. Thus, relatives play an important role in the onset and development of the disorder, while at the same time the diagnosis of BPD and the associated symptoms influence the status of relatives. Some studies show high levels of burden, difficulties in emotion regulation and a deterioration in the well-being of the relatives of patients with BPD. The objective of this work was to study the level of burden and difficulties in emotional regulation in a sample of 49 relatives of patients with BPD, as well as to determine their levels of quality of life. In addition, the possible relation among these variables was also studied.

The Quality of Life Index (QLI), the Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale (DERS) and the Burden Assessment Scale (BAS) were used to carry out the study.

Regarding the results, relatives showed burden scores above the average, moderate difficulties in emotion regulation and also a moderate level of quality of life.

Moreover, a significant and negative correlation was obtained between burden and quality of life, and a significant and positive correlation was shown between the difficulties in emotion regulation and burden.

These data provide evidence about the importance of taking into account families in the BPD intervention processes to improve the well-being of both patients and relatives.

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