

Development of the Family Capacity of Management of Patients with Autism Spectrum Disorder Diagnosis

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Abstract : Caregivers of patients diagnosed with ASD are subjected to high stress situations due to the complexity and multiple levels of daily activities that require the organization of events, behaviors and socioemotional situations, such as immediate decision making and in public spaces. The cognitive and emotional requirement needed to fulfill this caregiving role exceeds the regular cultural process that adults receive in their process of preparation for conjugal and parental life. Therefore, in many cases, caregivers present a high level of overload, poor capacity to organize and mediate the development process of the child or patient about their care. Aims: Improvement in the cognitive and emotional capacities related to the caregiver function, allowing the reduction of the overload, the feeling of incompetence and the characteristic level of stress, developing a more organized conduct and decision making more oriented towards the objectives and procedural gains necessary for the integral development of the patient with diagnosis of ASD. Method: The study was performed with 20 relatives, randomly selected from a total of 140 patients attended. The family members were submitted to the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale III intelligence test and the Family assessment Management Measure (FaMM) questionnaire as a previous evaluation. Therapeutic activity in a small group of family members or caregivers, with weekly frequency, with a minimum workload of two hours, using the Feuerstein Instrumental Enrichment Cognitive Development Program - Feuerstein Instrumental Enrichment for ten months. Reapplication of the previous tests to verify the gains obtained. Results and Discussion: There is a change in the level of caregiver overload, improvement in the results of the Family assessment Management Measure and highlight to the increase of performance in the cognitive aspects related to problem solving, planned behavior and management of behavioral crises. These results lead to the discussion of the need to invest in the integrated care of patients and their caregivers, mainly by enabling cognitively to deal with the complexity of Autism. This goes beyond the simple therapeutic orientation about adjustments in family and school routines. The study showed that when the caregiver improves his/her capacity of management, the results of the treatment are potentiated and there is a reduction of the level of the caregiver's overload. Importantly, the study was performed for only ten months and the number of family members attended in the study (n = 20) needs to be expanded to have statistical strength.

Keywords : caregiver overload, cognitive development program ASD caregivers, feuerstein instrumental enrichment, family assessment management measure

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