

Insight in psychotic disorders

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Introduction

The Unawareness of Mental Disorders Scale (SUMD) was designed by Amador et al. to evaluate the awareness of illness in psychotic patients. Lower awareness has been associated with poorer treatment adherence and, globally, worse evolution¹.

Objective

To evaluate level of awareness in patients diagnosed with psychotic disorder visited in an outpatient mental health center, located in a poor neighborhood of Barcelona.

Method

Cross-sectional study. The sample was made up from patients with psychotic disorders and currently attending our center. Sociodemographic and clinical data were described.

Insight was assessed by using the abbreviated version of the SUMD, that is composed by three items, and evaluates awareness of mental disorder, awareness of the effects of medication and awareness of the social consequences of the disorder. Each item was encoded in following way: not applicable (response of '0' or missing data), aware (response of '1' and '2'), slightly aware/unaware (response of '3'), and seriously unaware (response of '4' and '5'). We consider a total score of 3 to 6 as "insight", 7 to 11 as "moderate lack of insight" and 12 to 15 "severe lack of insight".

The results were analyzed using the SPSS statistical package.

Table 1. The abbreviated version of the Scale to Assess Unawareness in Mental Disorder.

1. Awareness of mental disorder: In the most general terms, does the subject believe that he or she has a mental disorder?
2. Awareness of the effects of drugs: Does the subject believe that medications have diminished the severity of his or her symptoms (if applicable)?
3. Awareness of the consequences of mental disorder: What is the subject's belief regarding the reason(s) he or she has been unemployed, evicted, hospitalized, etc.?

Results

A total of 50 patients were included in the study, with mean age 42.04 years and 80% were male. Diagnoses included were schizophrenia (60%), schizoaffective disorder (28%), psychotic disorder not otherwise specified (8%) and delusional disorder (4%). Mean score of patients on the clinical global impression scale was 4.04.

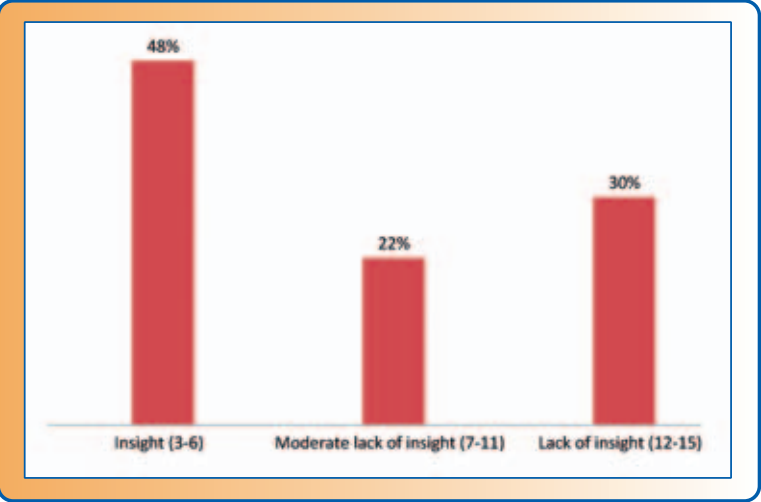
Regarding the awareness of mental disorder, 52% of patients obtained a score between 1 and 2, so they think they have a mental illness. On the other hand, 34% think they don't have any psychiatric disorder. Forty-eight per cent believed that medication reduced the frequency or intensity of symptoms while the 34% do not think so. Forty-eight per cent referred relevant social consequences to their mental disorder, whereas 36% believed that it's not related.

Overall, 48% of patients obtained a score between 3 and 6, so they have "insight", 22% had moderate lack of insight and 30% obtained a score between 12 and 15 wich is considered as "lack of insight".

Table 2. SUMD results

SUMD 1	1 and 2	52%
	3	14%
	4 and 5	34%
SUMD 2	1 and 2	48%
	3	18%
	4 and 5	34%
SUMD 3	1 and 2	48%
	3	16%
	4 and 5	36%

Figure 1. Insight evaluated by abreviated SUMD



Conclusions

Approximately one third of the sample shows little awareness of disorder, about the effects of medication and about the social consequences of having a mental disorder. It's important to identify these patients that are attended in the outpatient mental health centers and carry out a multidisciplinary and comprehensive approach because they tend to have poorer treatment responses and outcomes.

Bibliography

1- A. I. Ruiz, et al. Adaptación al español de la escala de valoración de la no conciencia de trastorno mental (SUMD). Actas Esp Psiquiatr 2008;36(2):111-119.