

# Effect of a psychoeducational group in dementia patients caregivers

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## Introduction and aims

Many works highlight the idea that caregivers of patients with dementia are at high risk of suffering psychological distress. For this reason, different interventions focusing on caregivers have been designed, among which psychoeducational groups (PG) have received more interest and demonstrated benefits in reducing psychological distress. PG applied in caregivers of patients with dementia have three main objectives: a) To provide proper information about the illness b) To provide strategies to take care of the patient c) To promote self-care and health behaviors in caregivers.

The goals of this work are a) To describe features of participants of PG for caregivers of patients with dementia and b) To assess the PG effects on caregiver's psychological distress and in knowledge and skills to take care of the patient.

## Method

Subjects 42 caregivers of patients in medical follow-up in a unit of cognitive and behavioral disorders (EAIA) who participated in the PG and the 42 patients diagnosed with dementia. *Methodology* measures on different social-demographic variables plus scores in different scales obtained from patient and caregiver were collected at baseline: Global Deterioration Scale (GDS), Barthel Index (BI) and General Health Questionnaire (GHQ); and at the end of the group (GHQ, Opinion Questionnaire). PG consists of 5 fortnightly sessions of 90 minutes duration where it is provided information about the disease course, prognosis, symptoms, treatment and impact on the caregiver (Table 1. PG content)

## Results

- Attendees were mostly women (67%), spouse (50%) or children (50%) of the patient. Caregivers were  $56.6 \pm 14.2$  (mean  $\pm$  sd) years old and lived mostly with the patient (90%) Patient was  $73 \pm 10.3$  (mean  $\pm$  sd) years old, mostly women (60 %) diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease (81 %), with a GDS 4 (60%) and a slight dependence (Barthel  $90 \pm 12$ ) (Table 2. Sample description)
- The results of the GHQ- 12 show significant decrease ( $p < 0.05$ ) of psychological distress expressed by caregivers, specially the feeling of not being able to overcome its difficulties, the ability to enjoy daily activities, the ability to cope problems and sadness or unhappiness. (Graphic 1. Results GHQ before and after group)
- The results of opinion questionnaire indicate that 98% of caregivers were satisfied with the content of the issues and their applicability and they had improved the knowledge and skills to cope with self-care and patient. (Graphic 2. Questionnaire of opinion responses)

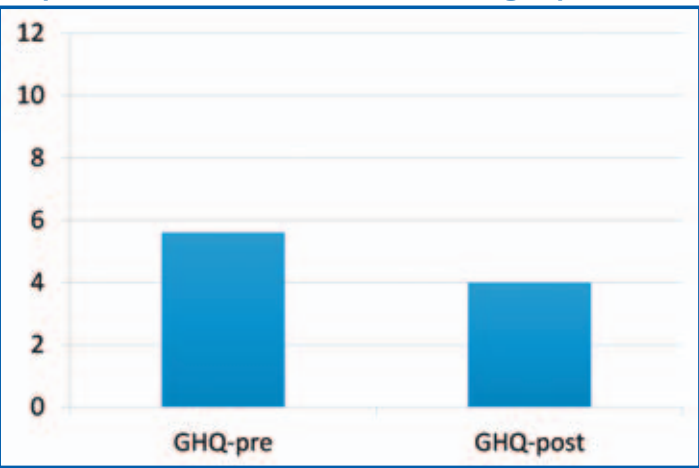
Table 1. PG content

Session 1	Introduction of the program and goals
Session 2	Information about the disease, clinical course, symptoms and treatment.
Session 3	Emotional and behavioral changes in dementia. Problem solving.
Session 4	Impact of the disease on the caregiver
Session 5	Information about social and legal aspects

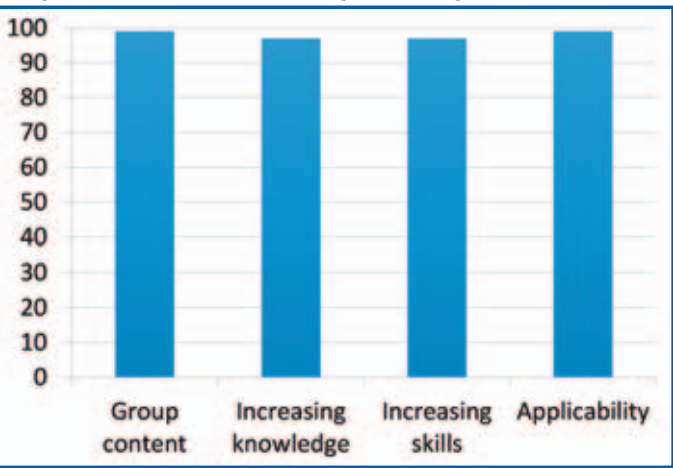
Table 2. Sample description

Caregivers	N=42 (%)
Sex (Women)	28 (67%)
Spouse	21 (50)
Age	56.6 $\pm$ 14.2 (mean $\pm$ sd)
Patients	N=42 (%)
Women	25 (60)
Age	73 $\pm$ 10.3 (mean $\pm$ sd)
Living with	Couple 29 (69) Son/daughter 9 (21.5) Alone 4 (9.5)
Diagnose (Alzheimer)	Alzheimer 34(81) Fronto-temporal 6 (14.2) Vascular+Alzheimer1(2.4) Others 1(2.4)
GDS	GDS 4 25 (60) GDS 5 17(40)
Barthel (mean $\pm$ sd)	90 $\pm$ 12

Graphic 1. Results of GHQ before and after group



Graphic 2. Questionnaire of opinion responses



## Conclusions

- The caregivers profile corresponds to daughters or wives of middle age living with a patient with Alzheimer disease's and mild dependence.
- The psychological distress reported by caregivers decreased after the group took place, while knowledge about the disease and skills to address it improved.
- These results are consistent with those obtained in previous works, which recommend implementing such interventions in caregivers in order to improve the welfare of patients and their caregivers.

## Bibliography

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