

Short-term efficacy of a psychotherapeutic intervention model in nursing on adult psychiatric outpatients with the nursing diagnosis “anxiety”: A randomised controlled trial

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Introdução & objetivos: Several efficacious treatments for anxiety are available, including different forms of psychotherapy and pharmacotherapy. However, literature tends to grant more findings from studies about the efficacy of psychotherapies provided by nurses than from studies about the efficacy of nursing psychotherapeutic interventions (interventions classified, for instance, on Nursing Interventions Classification). Moreover, no studies were to be found in literature about the efficacy of psychotherapeutic interventions on anxiety as a symptom. Hence, the aim of this study is to evaluate the short-term efficacy of a previously developed psychotherapeutic intervention in nursing on Portuguese adult psychiatric outpatients with the nursing diagnosis “anxiety”.

Metodologia: Single-blind, randomised controlled trial. Participants were psychiatric outpatients, aged 18-64, with the nursing diagnosis “anxiety”. They were randomly allocated to an intervention group ($n = 29$) or a treatment-as-usual control group ($n = 31$). The intervention consisted in Nursing Interventions Classification psychotherapeutic interventions for nursing diagnosis “anxiety”. One mental health nurse administered the individual-based intervention over a period of 5 weeks (45-60 minutes sessions, once a week). A treatment-as-usual control group received only pharmacotherapy (if applicable). The main outcomes, anxiety level and anxiety self-control, were assessed using the Portuguese version of Nursing Outcomes Classification outcomes “Anxiety level” and “Anxiety self-control”, respectively. The time points for assessment were at zero (pre-intervention) and 6 (post-intervention) weeks.

Resultados e discussão: Patients from both groups presented gains in the anxiety level, but patients in the intervention group presented significantly better results than the ones in the control group ($t(58) = -4.29$; $p < 0.001$). Moreover, only patients in the intervention group presented significant gains in the anxiety self-control ($t(28) = -6.47$; $p < 0.001$). The psychotherapeutic intervention presented a very large effect size ($d = 1.11$) on the anxiety level and a huge effect size ($d = 1.65$) on the anxiety self-control.

Conclusões: This study demonstrated the psychotherapeutic intervention model in nursing was efficacious in decreasing the anxiety level and improving the anxiety self-control in a group of adult psychiatric outpatients with pathological anxiety, immediately after the intervention. The very large effect size identified suggests that the improvements could be directly attributed to the intervention.

Palavras-chave: *Ansiedade; Pesquisa em enfermagem clínica; Enfermagem psiquiátrica; Psicoterapia breve.*

Keywords: *Anxiety; Clinical nursing research; Psychiatric nursing; Psychotherapy, brief.*

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