

Clinical and psychological characterization of patients with morbid obesity waiting for bariatric surgery in a portuguese hospital

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important factors in understanding and in the treatment planning of the disease.

Introduction and aims: The treatment of obesity with bariatric surgical procedures requires a biopsychosocial assessment of factors associated with the etiology and maintenance of this disease. This study examines the psychological characteristics of a Portuguese sample with morbid obesity before bariatric surgery.

Methods: Thirty seven women waiting for an adjustable gastric banding procedure in the General Surgical Unit of “Hospital da Prelada” were interviewed for psychological assessment. As part of the psychological protocol it was also applied the Portuguese version (Canavarro,1999) of the self report instrument *Brief Symptom Inventory* (Derogatis,1982).

Results: The 37 patients, aged 19 to 60 y.o. (M=36;SD=10.64), being 59.5% married (N=22) and 67.5% parenting one or more children, presented with an average weight of 110.92 kg (SD=18.78) and a BMI of 41.3 kg/m² (SD=4.24). In terms of professional activity, 51.3% were employed, 37.9% unemployed and 10.8% were students. Regular psychiatric or psychological therapy was undertaken by 37.8% and 32.4% of women used anxiolytic or antidepressant medication. The dietary evaluation identified 70.3% of the women without any diet planning and lacking physical exercise practices. In the psychological problem assessment we verified elevated scores of psychopathological symptoms when comparing with the Portuguese normal sample (Canavarro, 1999), specifically in the *Somatization* scale (M=1; SD=.65), *Interpersonal Sensitivity* (M=1.13; SD=.87) and the *Depression* dimension (M=1.06; SD=.85).

Conclusions: According to the literature, this sample of patients with morbid obesity demonstrated irregular food intake, sedentary and emotional/humour disturbances, which are