The relative influences of proactive coping skills, emotional distress and self-esteem on functioning and quality of life of schizophrenic patients

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Persons with schizophrenia tend to fail using effective coping skills in order to adaptively face daily life stressors. There is evidence linking the use of active problem-solving coping skills to better functional outcomes. However, few studies attempted to analyze the impact of proactive coping skills in functioning and quality of life. The aim of this study was to examine the relative associations between proactive coping skills, emotional distress, self-esteem, functioning and quality of life (QOL) among people diagnosed with schizophrenia.

Methods

- **Participants:** 23 Portuguese persons diagnosed with Schizophrenia (Age Md = 43.6, SD = 8.84; 61% males).

- **Instruments:**
  - Life Skills Profile (Portuguese version by Rocha et al., 2006) was used to determine psychosocial functioning. This scale was developed to measure five dimensions: self-care (grooming, hygiene, budgeting, food preparation, etc.); non-turbulence (degree of offensiveness, violence, intrusiveness, anger control, etc.); social contact (friendships, interpersonal interests and activities, etc.); communication (conversational skills, inappropriate gesturing, etc.); and responsibility (regarding personal property and medication, etc.).
  - World Health Organization Quality of Life Brief (Portuguese version by Vaz-Serra et al., 2006) was administered to assess the participants’ quality of life. The WHOQOL is a generic quality of life instrument that was designed to be applicable to people living under different circumstances, conditions and cultures, providing measurement on four domains: physical, psychological, social relationship and environment. The physical domain has questions related to daily activities, treatment compliance, pain and discomfort, sleep and rest, energy and fatigue. In the psychological domain, there are questions of positive and negative feelings, self-esteem, body image and physical appearance, personal beliefs and attention. The social relationship domain is related to personal relationships, social support and sexual activity. The environmental domain investigates safety, financial resources, health and social care, opportunities for acquiring new information, and participation in and opportunities for recreation and transportation.
  - Proactive Coping Inventory (Greenglass, Schwarzer, Jakubiec, Fiksenbaum & Taubert, 1999) consists of seven scales and a total of 55 items which assess, on a cognitive and behavioral level, a way of coping based on resourcefulness and responsibility. In this sense, proactive coping is distinguished from other coping forms in that it incorporates and utilizes social and non-social resources; it employs visions of success; it uses positive emotional strategies; and it includes goal setting and tenacious goal pursuit. The seven scales of the Proactive Coping Inventory are: the Proactive Coping Scale, the Reflective Coping Scale, Strategic Planning, Preventive Coping, Instrumental Support Seeking, Emotional Support Seeking and Avoidance Coping.
  - Depression Anxiety Stress Scales (Portuguese version by Pais-Ribeiro, Honrado & Leal, 2004) was used to obtain self-reported information of three related negative emotional states (emotional distress) of depression, anxiety and tension/stress. The version adapted for this study was the short-form version of Lovibond and Lovibond’s (1995) 42-item self-report measure. In this assessment, participants rated the extent to which they have experienced each symptom over the past week, on a 4-point severity/frequency scale.

Bibliography


Results and Conclusions

- Proactive coping, reflective coping, strategic planning and preventive coping correlated positively with different dimensions of functioning and QOL. Avoidance coping wasn’t correlated with any functional outcome. We also didn’t find significant correlations between distress symptoms and functioning and QOL, excepting depressive symptoms, which were correlated with communication skills and social relationships. Stress symptoms significantly correlated with physical health of QOL. Self-esteem was positively associated with several quality of life domains.

Conclusively, we can say that schizophrenic patients can positively influence their functional outcomes, QOL and well-being, if using proactive coping strategies and goal striving. These skills should be emphasized in psychosocial rehabilitation programs.