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PSYCHOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF ANOREXIC PATIENTS' MOTHERS IN THE SOUTHEAST BRAZIL: IMPLICATIONS FOR TREATMENT AND PROGNOSIS OF ANOREXIA NERVOSA IN A PUBLIC SERVICE

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**Introduction:** Considering both the complexity of factors that composes the anorexia nervosa (AN) and the recommendation of important organizations related to health, it becomes fundamental the reflection on psychotherapeutic interventions proposed to patient's relatives.

**Objectives:** Expand the knowledge about the mother-daughter relationship in AN in order to develop a conceptual framework that improves the way to handle with this disorder, to reduce the factors that maintain it and to improve the prognosis.

**Method:** Clinical method, through clinical observation regarding a group of patients' relatives with eating disorders at an outpatient service at a university hospital in the Southeast Brazil.

**Results:** We have identified common characteristics in the mother-daughter relationship in AN, that maintain the structure of anorexic patients, influencing directly on the severity of each case and therapeutic possibilities. The mutual control: anorexic's mothers showed the need of controlling their daughters, denying the daughter's individuality, trying to become tutors of their actions and thus also become controlled by them; The dialectic between omnipotence and impotence: sense of powerlessness in face of numerous failed attempts to help their daughters, with feelings of guilt, as if they were fully responsible for the daughter's disorder; The relationship of devotion, passion and hostility between mother and daughter: with a fused attitude with her daughter, the mother is even more limited to understand their real needs, invading their personal space.

**Conclusions:** The findings allowed to identify important aspects of mother-daughter relationship in AN, that can improve clinical interventions for the treatment.