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EVALUATION OF RESPONSE TO COGNITIVE-BEHAVIOR THERAPY FOR CHILDHOOD ANXIETY DISORDERS: PRELIMINARY RESULTS

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Introduction: Anxiety disorders are prevalent in childhood and can cause significant impairment in adulthood. Although cognitive-behavior therapy (CBT) show evidence of response in children with anxiety disorders, some questions remain open.

Objective: To evaluate the response of an adapted protocol of group CBT for anxiety disorders in childhood.

Method: This is a non-controlled clinical trial of 14 sessions of 90 minutes for children 10 to 13 years. Patients were selected from public schools diagnosed with Anxiety Disorder in Childhood, according to KDSADS. The protocol used was based on manual Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy for Anxious Children: Therapist Manual for Group Treatment of Flannery-Schroeder and Kendall (2006), the Coping Cat Workbook and on clinical experience of therapists. Improvement was evaluated by Clinical Global Impression scale (CGI).

Results: To date 20 patients completed the 14 sessions of group CBT. There was a predominance of females (n = 15; 75%), mean age 11.6±0.68 years. The most frequent diagnosis was Generalized Anxiety Disorder (n= 14; 70%) and 14 patients had at least one anxiety disorder and comorbidity (70%). Regarding the response to therapy, there was a significant decrease in symptoms ($p < 0.001$) assessed by the CGI (mean and standard deviation) before (4.15±0.93) and after (2.95±1.05) in the CBT group. Higher CGI at baseline was a predictor of poor response (4.67±0.65 vs. 0.74±3:38; p = 0.001).

Conclusion: Partial results of this study show that the protocol used for group CBT is effective in improving clinical patients with anxiety disorders in childhood.