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Psychological interventions with cardiac patients

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Background: Although the majority of cardiac patients have at least one modifiable behavioral (e.g. insufficient physical activity, smoking, high-calorie, -fat, and sodium diet) or emotional risk factor (e.g. depression, anxiety, low level of problem-solving skills) psychological interventions are rarely involved in the standard care.

Objective: Literature review on the effectiveness and types of applied psychological therapies with cardiac patients to clarify what means do we have in developing patient care and increase recovery rate.

Method: Selective literature review. Search was conducted in 2014.

Results: There are different types of psychological interventions (e.g. psycho-education, behavioral therapy, cognitive therapies, supportive therapies) applied as part of comprehensive cardiac rehabilitation programs. The purposes of psychological interventions are to (1) screen psychological predictors of risk, such as anxiety, depression; (2) facilitate a return to normal living; (3) encourage patients to make lifestyle changes in order to prevent further events. A meta-analysis of 8,988 patients in 37 trials found that cardiac rehabilitation programs including psychological interventions resulted in a 34% reduction in cardiac mortality and a 29% reduction in recurrent MI at 1-10 years follow up.

Conclusion: Psychological interventions seem to be effective enhancing recovery rate. These findings emphasize the roll of psychologists in the prevention and rehabilitation of cardiac diseases.

Biography

P Bagdi is a psychologist working in the Psychotherapy Department and Outpatient Clinic of the National Centre for Spinal Disorders Budapest in Hungary since 2010. She has been conducting her PhD in Health and Personality Psychology at the University of Pécs's Doctoral School of Psychology since 2012. She becomes Clinical Psychologist and Hypnotherapist this year. Her research work includes: Pain management, psycho-education for chronic pain patients, assessments of psychological risk factors before surgery, psychological preparation for surgery, and effects of suggestive recordings during general anaesthesia.

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