

## Abstract

**Objective:** Psychoeducation of family has been suggested to be effective in improving clinical outcomes of patients with psychosis. However there is lack of understanding of the relationship between knowledge about psychosis of caregivers and clinical outcomes of patients such as medication compliance. The current study aims at evaluating the general knowledge about psychosis of caregivers and their understanding of the illness of their relatives, in comparison of the knowledge and understanding of the illness of their relatives (patients) with early psychosis. With that, the study will then explore the relationship of different aspects of knowledge about psychosis and understanding of the illness of caregivers and patients with medication compliance.

**Method:** Patient-caregiver dyads (n=80) were recruited from the out-patient clinics of the Early Intervention Service in Hong Kong (two centers). General knowledge about psychosis of patients and caregivers was assessed with modified multiple-choice questionnaire, Knowledge of Schizophrenia Test (KAST). Semi-structured interview, Knowledge of Psychosis Interview (KOPI), was used to assess the caregiver's understanding of the illness of their relative and the patient's self appreciation of the illness. Medication compliance of patients was determined with self-reported questionnaire of Medication Adherence Ratings (MARS) and information from case managers and clinical notes. Other assessments include clinical symptoms, insight of the illness and attitude towards drug of patients.

**Results:** Overall level of knowledge about psychosis of patients and caregivers are similar but patients were better than caregivers in recognizing psychotic symptoms ( $\chi^2=8.229$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $p=.004$ ). More caregivers than patients labeled the condition as psychosis ( $\chi^2=6.502$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $p=.011$ ). Both caregivers and patients were optimistic about the level of recovery, more patients believed the chance of relapse was lower than 20% ( $\chi^2=12.181$ ,  $df=2$ ,  $p=.002$ ). Non-compliance was found to be 43.8%. Caregiver's recognition of psychosis diagnosis is correlated with compliance ( $\chi^2=5.498$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $p=.019$ ) whereas patient's recognition of need for longer duration of medication treatment is correlated with compliance ( $\chi^2=10.399$ ,  $df=2$ ,  $p=.006$ ).

**Conclusion:** The current study suggests knowledge about psychosis of patients is correlated with their caregivers in general. However there is specific discrepancy in their understanding of the illness, particularly in the symptoms recognition, diagnosis of the condition, relapse chances and duration of medication needed. The study also supports positive relationship of specific knowledge about psychosis of patients and caregivers and medication compliance. Therefore structured personalized psychoeducation should be an important element of intervention for patients with early psychosis. Further longitudinal study will be required to explore further the link of knowledge and clinical outcomes.

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