

Covid-19: how did it impact adolescents with eating disorders?

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BACKGROUND AND AIMS: Home confinement during SARS-Cov-2-Pandemia had a serious impact on adolescence, in particular on patients with eating-disorders (ED). The aim of this work was to investigate whether the percentage of adolescents with ED and their seriousness has increased from Apr-2020 to Jun-2021 as compared to the previous fifteen months.

METHODES: We collected information from ED pediatric patients that were admitted into the Neuropsychiatric-Ward-of-a-Pediatric-Hospital (NPI) for more than a day. Data included gender, age and BMI. Then we divided them into two groups: who entered from Jan-2019 to Mar-2020 (when Covid-19 started) and who from Apr-2020 to Jun-2021. Starting from the Diagnostic-and-Therapeutic-Care-Pathways (DTCP) called "DTCP-for-treating-eating-disorders-in-adolescents", we analyzed their nutritional rehabilitation: who received only an Enteral-Nutritional-Rehabilitation with food supplements and Nutritional Scheme (ENR) and who, in addition, Nasogastric-Tube (SGT) or/and Partial-Parental-Nutrition (PPN) for three days or more with a low intake of calories and fluids to avoid the Refeeding-Syndrome.

RESULTS: 67 patients, 64 females and 3 males were admitted into the ED-center-of-NPI for more than a day from Jan-2019 to Jun-2021 with a diagnosis of ED. They had between 9-18 years (mean=14,8 years) and the majority a starting BMI less than 14,5. In the first group 25 patients were diagnosed: 100% received ENR, 5% ENR+SGT, 60% ENR+PPN. In the second, 42 patients were diagnosed: 100% received ENR, 30% ENR+SGT, 90% ENR+PPN.

CONCLUSION: From Apr-2020 to Jun-2021 there was an increase of 68% and seriousness in ED as compared to the previous fifteen months: this condition determined more complex rehabilitation programs.