“Psychological resilience” and the role of patient empowerment

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MEDICAL DECISION MAKING

• A discipline that focuses on:

  - Psychological and cognitive processes involved in physicians’ decisions
  - Psychological and cognitive processes involved in patients’ decisions
  - Healthcare organisational processes

Aim - to promote better decision making processes in medicine, increasing patient’s well-being.
A Psychological Perspective on Resilience

• “Psychological resilience” is the capacity to resist to a sharp decline in functioning even though a person gets worse.

Often the only person who sees the whole picture of the patient journey is the patient herself.
Medicine is changing...

Paternalistic approach → Patient-centered approach

Shared decision making → Patient empowerment
Psychological Resilience - Individual Adaption during a crisis (adapted from Patterson’s FAAR Model)
(Illness and its consequences)

MEANINGS
- Situational
- Individual identity
- World view

ADJUSTMENT PHASE

DEMANDS
- Stressors
- Strains
- Daily hassles

CAPABILITIES
- Resources
- Coping behaviors

- INDIVIDUAL ADAPTATION +
One critical determinant of resilience is engaging directly with the challenging event. In psychology, resilience is considered as a process and not as a trait of the individual. Engagement can occur “naturally” (Individual resources, as personality and cognitive factors) or it may be fostered by some types of intervention in which the individual is empowered to acquire a sense of control over her behavior, feelings, thoughts, and development (Worell & Remer, 1992).
Resilience and Empowerment

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EMPOWERMENT

INDIVIDUAL ADAPTATION
Resilience and Empowerment

EMPOWERMENT

- INDIVIDUAL ADAPTATION

RESILIENCE

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CAPABILITIES
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Patient empowerment

- Competence and control over health and health behaviour

- Manage her/his own condition collaborating with providers (shared decision making) to access appropriate care
How to improve the patient’s empowerment in practice

Promoting shared decision making

Providing (understandable) information

Considering each single patient as a Person with his own psycho-cognitive characteristics, as well as needs, values and expectations
(I) Promoting a Shared decision making approach

Physicians have competences and theoretical knowledge

Patients experience their own illness in a personal way expressing needs, values and expectations that are unique to them
Shared decision making
(II) Promoting a Personalised Medical Approach

- Attention to the Psychological aspects (Personal and Cognitive) that make each Person different from others
Advantages of a Personalised Medical Approach

- Maintaining respect for patient values, preferences, and needs, and informing and educating patients will allow them to set their own goals through *shared decision-making* with the physician.

- It is necessary to collect such information in a way that helps physicians deal with it.
The ALGA questionnaire: a support tool for developing patient empowerment
ALGA as first step to promote a personalised shared decision making approach

Patient's profile

ALGA

Personalized interaction with the patient

Physician

> Shared decision making
> Empowerment
> Resilience
The patient is not the only one involved in her illness.

The whole family system is affected by it and needs to find and use resources to cope with the dysfunctional condition.

This is particularly true in presence of a chronic disease, where a long term condition might modify the habits of the family.
In presence of either acute or chronic diseases resilience becomes a crucial aspect in order to improve:

- the ability of the patient and the family to deal with the dysfunctional aspects of the illness

- their short/long term quality of life
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