Oral Communication

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Cognitive Behavior Disorder in Intensive Neurorehabilitation Unit: Literature Review and Multicenter Survey

Topic: Neuroscience

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BACKGROUND

Cognitive-behavioral disorders represent one of the main challenges in the early rehabilitation of patients with Severe Acquired Brain Injury (SABI), regardless of etiology (traumatic brain injury, stroke, post-anoxic coma). Among these disorders, agitation is one of the most frequent and complex symptoms to manage. This study aims to explore both pharmacological and non-pharmacological treatments through an innovative interdisciplinary approach, involving physicians, nurses, psychologists, speech therapists, occupational therapists, and physiotherapists, coordinated by a Cochrane specialist and a clinical expert in SABI rehabilitation. The analysis of scientific evidence and the practical application of guidelines were investigated through a literature review and a multicenter survey.

METHODS

The study was conducted between March and June 2024 involving all Intensive Neurorehabilitation Centers of the Don Gnocchi Foundation (Milan, Rovato, Turin, Florence, La Spezia, Falconara, Sant'Angelo de Lombardi). A literature review was performed using the PICO framework, searching PubMed and Epistemonikos. Seven relevant studies were selected, and a multicenter survey was administered to 148 healthcare professionals to assess the application of clinical guidelines in practice. The sample consisted of 19% men and 81% women. The most represented professional categories were healthcare assistants (29.3%) and nurses (27.9%), followed by physiotherapists (16%). While 60.3% of participants had more than 10 years of clinical experience, only 24.5% had at least 10 years of experience in intensive neurorehabilitation.

RESULTS

A total of 90.3% of respondents reported direct experience in managing cognitive-behavioral disorders. Disorientation and agitation were identified as two of the most frequent symptoms (76.6%, 75.9%). Non-pharmacological approaches were employed in only 39.3% of centers, whereas pharmacological treatments, mainly atypical antipsychotics and antiepileptics, were more commonly used 59.3%. The survey revealed significant variability in clinical practices among centers and highlighted the need for continuous training, with 51.4% of professionals reporting a lack of specific preparation.

CONCLUSION

This study highlights the need for an interdisciplinary approach to optimize the management of cognitive-behavior disorders in SABI patients. The dissemination of clinical guidelines, combined with continuous education programs, could enhance the implementation of evidence-based practices, improving rehabilitation outcomes and standardizing interventions across centers

Statement of Disclosures

None

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