Cancer & Severe Mental Illness – mind the gap
A Program for Psychiatric Patients in a Portuguese Cancer Center

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Presenter  Lucia Monteiro, MD, Director, Psychiatry Service, IPO Lisboa
On behalf : A Ribeiro, R Coutinho, J Graça, M Mestre, F Carvalho (aa)

Instituto Portugues Oncologia, Lisboa, Portugal

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Background - bibliografic references

606 reviewed articles, Pub Med, ACS database, 2006-2016

key words: cancer diagnosis, cancer prevention, cancer treatment, severe mental illness

“Severe mental illness” (SMI), group of mental disorders that:

- Often includes schizophrenia, schizoaffective, bipolar disorders, severe forms of delusional, personality and obsessive-compulsive disorders
- Usually affect people in early adulthood have a profound negative impact in terms of disability and quality of life
- The estimated worldwide prevalence of SMI is 4% (1,2)

There is strong evidence that SMI adults have two to three times higher mortality than the general population = less 13-30 years of life expectancy (3-5)

Medical mortality among SMI pts is mostly due to cardiovascular and cancer (2-5x higher risk in SMI)
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Risk factors for Cancer in SMI pts:

- **tobacco use** (the single largest causative factor) [7]
- alcohol & drug abuse
- poor self-care
- promiscuous sexual behavior
- viral infections [8,9]
- poor diet, less exercise, obesity [10-12]
Inequalities of SMI cancer care & prevention: *the gap*...

- low self-care and low health literacy
- deficient compliance with GPs’ routines and screenings
- psychiatrists often underestimate their responsibility and pivotal role in SMI pts general health
- somatic complaints are often underestimated for psychogenic attribution in psychotic pts \(^{(13-15)}\)
- fragmentation of health care systems: primary care, psychiatric & oncological services

- deficient cancer screening, late oncological diagnosis \(^{(16,17)}\)
- simplification of oncologic treatment protocols, often less accurate \(^{(14)}\)
Instituto Portugues de Oncologia, Lisboa (IPO Lisbon), main comprehensive cancer center in Portugal, 287 beds, **6500 new pts per year**; 47,000 first outpatient consultations in a total of 260,000.

IPO Lisbon’s Psychiatry Service (Psychiatry S), 5 senior psychiatrists plus residents providing:
- psychiatric assistance to cancer hospitalized /outpatients /their families
- intensive Consultation Liaison Psychiatry within multidisciplinary oncological teams

What’s about SMI & Cancer pts in our Cancer Center in 2016?

- observational, prospective study, data from SMI pts referred to Psychiatry S from all other Services, whether outpatient or hospitalized, **in the last 8 months (Jan-Aug 2016)**
- fulfill 3 criteria: (1) **18 years or older**; (2) suffering from a Serious and Persistent Mental Illness (New York State Office of Mental Health criteria) (3) suffering from an oncological illness undergoing treatment or follow up in IPO Lisbon
- characterization focused on socio-demographic, psychiatric and oncological data
- **n = 33 pts enrolled**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sociodemographic´s</th>
<th>n=33 (100%)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>67%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Age – years</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td>57</td>
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<tr>
<td>sd</td>
<td>12,4</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Civil state</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>33%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Widow</td>
<td>6%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Employment</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Active</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>24%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Never worked</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>49%</td>
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**GAF score**

Global Assessment of Functioning

- 71-80
- 61-70
- 51-60
- 41-50
- 31-40
- 21-30
- 11 a 20

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GAF score</th>
<th>number of patients</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11 a 20</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>21-30</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>31-40</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>41-50</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td>51-60</td>
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<tr>
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<td>71-80</td>
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</table>
Cancer Site

- Hematological: 32%
- Urogynecologic: 18%
- Breast: 12%
- Head & Neck: 20%
- Others: 18%

Tumor staging for solid tumors

- Stage I: 33%
- Stage II: 24%
- Stage IIa: 5%
- Stage III: 19%
- Stage IIIb: 5%

62% (I + II) localized cancer
Psycho-Oncologic Program for SMI pts with Cancer treated in IPO Lisbon, 2017:

- immediate referral to psycho-oncology clinic on admission
- providing a case manager or navigator when family is missing or not supportive
- referral to tobacco and nutrition clinics when necessary

- education for Oncology teams focused on screening, communication & coping with SMI pts
- education in regional Psychiatry Centers (Lisbon area) and Primary Care Units (IPO referral to PC Units) focused on cancer risks & how to prevent and screen cancer in SMI pts.

.... In order to reduce the gap & inequities in cancer care for people with severe mental illness
Thank You

psiq@ipolisboa.min-saude.pt
lmonteiro@ipolisboa.min-saude.pt

www.luciamonteiro.com
www.ipolisboa.pt