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A Randomized Controlled Study of Brief Family-Based Intervention in Obsessive Compulsive Disorder

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Running title: Family intervention in OCD

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ABSTRACT

Background: Cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT) for Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD) is therapist-intensive and prolonged making it less accessible to patients, particularly in resource-constrained situations. We examined the efficacy of a brief psychotherapeutic intervention as an adjunct to serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SRIs) in OCD.

Method: We randomized 64 adult OCD patients stabilized on SRIs to either the 6-session brief family-based intervention (BFBI; n=30) that included psychoeducation, exposure and response prevention and family intervention or to a control arm of relaxation exercises (RE). Assessments were conducted at baseline and at 1- and 3- months post-intervention. Primary outcome measure was response to treatment defined as ≥ 35% reduction in the Yale-Brown Obsessive Compulsive Scale total score relative to baseline score plus a Clinical Global Impression- Improvement rating of very much improved or much improved. Family accommodation and expressed emotions were also assessed.

Results: At 3- month follow-up, the BFBI group responded better than the RE group (53% vs. 12%, p < 0.001). Illness severity, family accommodation and expressed emotion declined significantly over time in the BFBI group compared to the RE group. The BFBI (OR =13.17, p < 0.001) and baseline illness severity (OR = 0.746, p < 0.011) predicted treatment response.
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