Couple relationships and acute cardiac disease
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Abstract
The occurrence of acute cardiac disease involves not only the patient from the organic/functional and psychical/relational point of view, but also his or her significant relationships, within which the couple relationship assumes a crucial role, not only because it is profoundly influenced by the partner’s acute cardiac attack, but also because it may assume a protective role in the psycho-physical recovery of the patient when the couple manages to activate positive relational strategies for sharing the event and managing the stress.

In general, research, although interested in the relational aspects of the acute cardiac disease, has given rise to studies that mainly use an individual perspective. In addition, literature on this theme, although finding itself at the crossroads between two areas of discipline, psychosocial and medical, has seldom investigated the connections between these two areas.

This research study attempts to redress this deficiency in literature and examines the individual and couple adjustment of single patients and patients in partnerships, and of the partners after acute cardiac attack. It is a longitudinal project with the first investigation upon discharge from the hospital and a second after eight months.

The study aims to investigate:

a. Whether and when the characteristics of the event (severity, relapses, disabling aspects, duration of the hospitalisation, need or not need for rehabilitation) influence the well-being (stress, depression) and the individual capacities of the patient and the partner (coping, self-efficacy, self-control), as well as the relationship itself.

b. How the couple relationship can predict the adjustment of the partners and their well-being.

c. The predictors of the patient engagement at the individual, medical-organisational and relational levels.

Data collection is still in progress.

Publications: