INTERPERSONAL PSYCHOTHERAPY IN THE TREATMENT OF MENTAL ILLNESS IN THE VULNERABLE ECONOMIC SCENARIO NOWADAYS: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY WITH DEPRESSED OUTPATIENTS

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INTRODUCTION - Portugal is a country with severe economic difficulties for the last 2 years. Considering the volatile and vulnerable economic social system today, in Portugal, the number of jobs decreased, unemployment increased and, as a consequence, mental illnesses as well. Because of it, and, the request for quicker treatments of mental health by the population are increasing significantly.

OBJECTIVE - Our objective is to evidence in Portugal one of the very first IPT researches as an advisable treatment of acute major depressive disorder, mainly in the current economic scenario, contributing to evidence an effective way to combat mental illness in Portugal.

METHODS - The ongoing longitudinal study consist of adult outpatients (n=50), diagnosed with acute major depressive episode. The intensity of depression was measured is sessions 1, 6 and 10, with the Center for Epidemiological Studies Depression Rating Scale (CES-D). The procedure is focused in one of four IPT problem areas (role transitions, disputes, grief and loss, and difficulties initiating or sustaining relationships).

RESULTS - The first results show significant trend to identify the Disputes as the main problem-area. The intensity of the depression is significant lower along sessions with same patients. In 8th session, there is a significant decrease of the depressive symptomatology and the patient is more functional and adapted.

CONCLUSIONS - Our research evidences the vulnerability to social context amidst the Portuguese economic crisis to depression, as well it evidences the effectiveness of IPT as a brief psychotherapy that responds to the current needs of a population with growing economic difficulties.