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SONS AND DAUGHTERS CARED BY PSYCHOTIC INPATIENTS: HOW IS THEIR MENTAL HEALTH STATUS?

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Backgroud: Parental pychosis can have a major impact on the household and studies indicate that they increase the risk of children developing behavioural, social, emotional and educational problems (Royal College of Psychiatrists, 2004). To our knowledge, there is scarce information available about the mental health status of the sons and daughters cared by psychotic inpatients. Potential interventions that mental health services could adopt by screening this at risk population are missed.
Aim: To assess the mental health status of the children cared by the psychotic inpatients admitted to an acute mental health ward in Porto. To determine the number of children that fulfill criteria of mental illness and of those at risk. To refer this population to a specialist clinic.

Methods: Prospective study: we will screen the sons and daughters of all the inpatients admitted with psychosis between the 1st September 2008 and the 30th November 2008 to a busy acute inpatient ward at Hospital Megalhães Lemos, Porto. We will use the Robert Goodman Strenghts and Weaknesses Questionnaire for the 18- year old and below and the SCL-90 for the adult population. The population that fulfills criteria for mental health problems and the ones that are identified as at risk will be referred to a specialist clinic and followed-up by an experienced psychiatrist.

Conclusions: To identify and quantify a vulnerable population at high risk of developing mental health problems and offering an early intervention may proove to have an important impact in the household wellbeing.