

MENTAL HEALTH CARE IN PORTUGAL

Tarefa:

1. Tendo em mente *Teoria da diversidade e universalidade dos cuidados culturais* (M. Leininger, 1991), **identifique no caso os factores culturais** que contribuem para o estado de saúde e para a oferta de cuidados de saúde.
2. Compare com a realidade portuguesa: quais as semelhanças e diferenças que encontra?
3. Que outra informação seria relevante para perceber as necessidades destes clientes e os cuidados a prestar?

Mr. José, born in Lisboa in 1951, 50 years old, divorced in 1983, retired from the Portuguese Navy.

Diagnosis: Paranoid Schizophrenia.

Present hospitalisation: October 1998

Self-perception of illness: "I know I have a psychiatric problem and I only feel better with the medication, ... without symptoms ... "

PAST HISTORY

Raised by his paternal grand-mother in Mozambique (Portuguese colony in Africa) from the age of one until 15 years-old. His grand-father beat his grand-mother.

At the age of 9 he went for the first time to a Psychiatrist (had night terrors, enuresis, no appetite, he nagged his grand-mother a lot) and was followed until he came back to Portugal (age of 15).

He studied until the 8th grade but quit school in 1968 without finishing it. At the age of 18 he volunteers for the Navy and 6 years later leaves it and stays unemployed.

Gets married at the age of 22, has two children. In 1983 his wife asks for the divorce, he is then separated from his children (ages 5-6) by the Court.

Smoked heavily, consumed alcohol and drugs.

CLINICAL HISTORY

In 1976, at 25-26 years old he started to attend a private psychiatrist complaining of being tired, "exhausted brain", mystic interests and concerns. Started anxiolytic, antidepressant and antipsychotic medication, which he interrupted a year and a half later.

When he was 29, he started to have mystic delirious ideas (he thought he was Jesus Christ, he thought his belated son was God), persecutory delirious ideas, visual hallucinations, with exaltation feelings ("crucifixes, calyces, hosts, I saw it in the sky, I wanted to unify the calyx and the host"), that caused altered behaviour with psychomotor agitation, during which he

jumped out of a window, he aggressed people and cried out loud that he was Jesus. He describes the episode like this: "... about two weeks before I felt very excited, couldn't sleep ..., and on that day I was very exalted, I wanted to go to the morgue to get a corps, I saw God in my youngest son, I locked myself with my son in a room and I started to pray.

I tried to aggress my wife when she tried to take the child away, I confused myself with Christ". During this exaltation, he ran away through a window, cut himself and was taken to a public psychiatric hospital (HMB).

At 34, he has worsening episodes of the illness, with reactivation of the delirium, and passes to action (acting out); at 36 he is hospitalised at HMB and runs away; at 41 he refers an episode of marked aggressiveness and hospitalisation at HMB. This worsening occurred after stopping the medication. In 1993, he says, "I felt ok, I took all the medication, I was compensated", he had neuroleptic retard medication, as well as antidepressants and anxiolytics, through injections and by-mouth. He stopped going to the Psychiatric follow-up, and he stopped taking the medication. He refers "I felt more or less well, sometimes I felt more aggressive, more violent"; he refers that when he felt he had "more problems, vision symptoms, I went to the pharmacy and had the injection". At a certain point, his uncle stopped paying for the injection and he "started owing the Pharmacy".

He refers continuous alcohol consumption "It made me feel good, euphoric; sometimes I got up at 5 in the morning to drink brandy"; and heroin consumption during a year, twice a week, habit that he kept until June 1996. He was at REMAR (a private organisation for drug addicts detoxification) He says that at this time, his behaviour got worse, because this institution intensified his mystic and religious thoughts and his ideation with Jesus and God "They didn't let me take any medication when I felt worse; ... they said God was the supreme doctor and I needed no medication, just Faith, a lot of Faith in God".

He refers having suicidal ideas, which had happened before (when he knew his son was HIV positive, he shared his needle), and tried to commit suicide with medication and cutting his veins.

He says that not long before hitting his grand-mother, he was very irritated, violent, with constant mystic and delirious ideas, "always reading the Bible, I identified myself with John the Baptist, I thought I had been sent to preach Christ's faith, ... " and he consumed too much alcohol: 6-7 brandy's a day, wine, beer".

The day before the aggression, he says he had an argument with his grand-mother about the belonging of the painting "The Last Supper" and that the next day in the morning he had another fight that he describes like this:

"There was a discussion that turned out in violence, she didn't let me go, wanted to stop me from

going out, she closed the door, I opened it, she grabbed me to come out with me, the verbal talk was over, I was out of my mind because she wouldn't let me go". During this discussion "I hit her first with a mug and it didn't break, there was a half-size bottle of beer on the table and I hit her on the head"; he denies any other aggression (contrary to the autopsy report that states the presence of abdominal injury as a consequence of punching with hands and feet). He says he hadn't drunk that day and denies visual and hearing hallucinations.

At present, Mr. José is sorry and recognises that "I stopped taking the medication and so I was de-compensated and killed my grand-mother with a half-size bottle of beer". And he goes on "My grand-mother was what I loved more in my life; in my normal state I wouldn't do this"; "I was only aware of my mental state when I killed my grandmother".

Now he feels more calm, more sociable, more his friend's friend, less selfish; ...I attained maturity too late".

He is sorry he has been abandoned, but he understands it because he hurt a lot of people. He says he never had any visitors, which hurts him a lot; his mother can't visit him because "she has cancer and can't move". When his sentence is finished, and while he is waiting for an answer from the social assistant, he wants to go to a home, since his mother doesn't accept him. Soon, Mr. José will visit his mother, shows feelings of happiness to see her again but feels sorry because she is so ill.

He feels well at the HSC (a public psychiatric hospital, at the unaccountable patients). He prefers this institution to the prison "there is more freedom, not so much control, but it has its disadvantages, when some norm is transgressed we have to put on the pyjama, which is a humiliating punishment". He shows a lot of gratitude and tenderness for his doctor and nursing team for the success in his treatment.