Abstract

This study aimed to know lupus outpatients' life experiences, in terms of the meanings they attributed to several phenomena associated to the process of becoming ill. Systemic Lupus Erythematosus is a chronic inflammatory disease, probably caused by a combination of inborn/hereditary predispositions and environmental factors, which leads to an abnormal stimulation of the immune system. Lupus life experience is associated to important psychosocial adaptation mechanisms of affected people. This work had a clinical-qualitative design and was performed in the dermatology service of a Brazilian General Hospital. The method included purposive sample, and a semistructured interview with open-ended questions was applied. After categorizing the interviewees' discourse, the discussion employed psychodynamic theories. The patients' reactions included the attempt to rebuild their relationships with their own strengths. Lupus patients' familiar and interpersonal conflicts seem to be associated with the idea that family and friends do not understand the nature of the disease.

Keywords

Lupus, adaptation, psychological, interview, psychological, skin and connective tissue diseases, self concept, qualitative research, psychosomatic medicine, chronic disease.