OBJECTIVE: The aim of this paper was to report the validity of an Instrument for Classification of Nursing Care Dependency Levels for Psychiatric Patients. METHODS: The development of the instrument was based on the following critical indicators of care: appearance and hygiene, thought expression, humor and affection, social interaction, activities, feeding and hydration, sleep, medication, eliminations, vital signs and others controls, and problems and somatic complaints. RESULTS: The scores for degree of dependence are graded on a 3-point scale which permits to determine dependency levels. The Delphi technic was used to validate the instrument. Experts agreed with the maintenance of 11 critical indicators. CONCLUSION: The results of this study showed the instrument is valid and may contribute to technological and scientific advances for psychiatric speciality in Brazil.

Keywords
Psychiatric nursing, Nursing care.