Abstract

Objective: To examine psychosocial functioning in eating disorder (ED) patients with restrictive and purgative subtypes. Method: Forty-four adult female patients with a diagnosis of ED were divided into restrictive (RP) and purgative (PP) groups according to the presence of purgative symptoms. Functioning was assessed using the Functioning Assessment Short Test (FAST) and the Global Assessment of Functioning Scale (GAF). Results: No differences were found in total FAST scores or in specific domains between the RP (39.58±11.92) and PP (45.75±11.75) groups (p = 0.19). However, PP showed more severe functional impairment than RP in the financial domain (p < 0.01). There were no differences in comorbidity with mood disorders, depressive symptoms, or general psychiatric symptoms between the two ED subtypes. Conclusions: The similarities found between PP and PR in overall functioning and in autonomy, cognition, work, interpersonal relationships, and leisure seem to reflect the use of an objective scale that corresponds to the clinical impression. In fact, the assessment of psychosocial functioning in ED patients using self-report instruments requires careful consideration because results may reflect the egosyntonic nature of symptoms commonly observed in these patients, particularly in the restrictive subtype.

Keywords

Eating disorders, anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa, psychosocial factors.