Abstract

Objective: To describe the sociodemographic and clinical profile of patients who underwent electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) at a university general hospital. Method: In this retrospective study, records from all patients undergoing ECT between January 1988 and January 2008 at the psychiatric unit of the general hospital of Universidade Estadual de Campinas (UNICAMP) were reviewed. Telephone contact was made with patients/relatives to collect follow-up data. Results: A total of 200 charts were reviewed. The majority of patients were women, with a mean age of 39 years, and history of psychiatric hospitalization. The main indications for ECT were depression and catatonia. Complications were observed in less than half of the cases, and most were temporary and not severe. There was a good psychiatric outcome for 89.7% of the patients, especially for catatonic patients (100%, p = 0.02). Thirty-four percent of the cases were later contacted by telephone calls, at a mean of 8.5 years between the procedure and the contact. Among these, three (1.5%) reported persistent memory disorders and 73% considered ECT a good treatment. Conclusion: ECT has been performed according to international guidelines. In the vast majority of cases, undesirable effects were temporary and not severe. Response to ECT was positive in most cases, particularly in catatonic patients.

Keywords

Electroconvulsive therapy, treatment outcome, psychiatric somatic therapies, treatment, general hospital psychiatry.