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Therapeutic Camp: Effects of an Educational Program to Self-management on Adolescents with Spina Bifida

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The number of children with Spina Bifida (SB) who survived reaching adulthood increased significantly and their adolescence transition is a major concern. The Purpose of this study is to create a Program that promotes the development of self-management competencies and facilitate their transition to adulthood. The evidence shows the effectiveness of psychoeducational interventions and highlights the educational programs to promote self-management competences in people with chronic condition (less hospitalizations, good levels of treatment adherence). The Main goal were to develop and implement an educational program for self- management (8 Sessions) to 56 adolescents with Spina Bifida between 10 and 18 years in a Camp environment and assess their effect on functionality, self-concept and self-esteem. With a before and after design, the analysis was performed using the program IBM SPSS Statistics 20. The Results revealed a significant main effect on functionality for time (motor and cognitive domains). In the Motor domain we emphasize the improvement on self-care and emptying dimension (bowel and bladder). Conclusions This program produces better effects on young people aged between 10 and 12 years without previous experience on camps, regardless of gender, level of injury, presence of hydrocephalus and the type of auxiliary gait devices they use. The program had greatest impact in the motor domain of the functionality, which remains six months later. In general, the results support that the experience improves the self-management competences and the functionality of youth with SB and, suggest that the program was highly effective.

Ethical Issues: We assure the accomplishment of all ethical procedures demanded, such as an informed consent request to integrate this project, answered by the parents and the children (if they had 13 years old or older). This study was approved by ethical committee of Nursing College of Lisbon, ASBIHP and Scientific Committee of University of Lisbon.

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