

## **BARROWS CARDS IN PATIENTS WITH COMORBILITY: A STUDY TRIAL**

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### **Background**

In Italy the most diagnosed comorbidities are type 2 diabetes mellitus and arterial hypertension. Their management is often complex and challenging. Barrows' method can educate patients identifying themselves in clinical situations, helping them develop problem-solving skills. Seventeen Barrows' Cards have been developed as an educational tool for patients with comorbidity.

### **Aim**

The aim of the study is to evaluate the efficacy of Barrows' Cards in a group of 25 patients with type 2 diabetes mellitus and arterial hypertension measuring improvements in therapeutic adherence, self-efficacy, management of co-morbidities and lifestyle.

### **Method**

Twenty-five patients with comorbidities were recruited from a University Hospital in Genoa through a non-probabilistic sampling. The Barrows' Cards were administered to patients, then their self-efficacy and therapeutic adherence were evaluated using the General Self-Efficacy Scale and the Morisky Medication Adherence Scale respectively. After a month, we did a telephonic follow-up to estimate any changes in the two scales. Then the strength of the cards and the patients' experienced improvements in the management of comorbidity were investigated through semi-structured interviews.

### **Result**

In telephonic follow-up significant improvements in terms of self-efficacy and therapeutic adherence were found. Patients have improved their lifestyle, could manage more easily various problems and events related to comorbidity, could handle troubles and difficulties that previously seemed unsolvable. Barrows' Cards have been defined by the patients as "useful", "interesting", "practical" and "easily understandable".

### **Conclusion**

Therapeutic education through Barrows' Cards has improved several aspects regarding patients' comorbidity and lifestyle, such as problem solving, diet and physical activity. Patients consider this method as valid and innovative.