

P03-188

GROUP THERAPY OF ADOLESCENTS ARRESTED IN A JUDICIAL INSTITUTION AND WITH DISORDERS RELATED TO THE CONSUMPTION OF PSYCHOACTIVE SUBSTANCES

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Objectives: To describe the experience of group therapy with offender adolescents in an Institution for minor violators ("*Fundação CASA*") and who have suffered from mental disorders related to psychoactive substance use.

Methods: "*Fundação CASA*" is an institution created to shelter minor offenders. In 2008 some were judicially referred for treatment to a University Hospital Psychoactive Substance Outpatients Service. An operative and informative group was formed, since they have not adapted to the already existing adult group. This group met weekly, aimed to prevent relapse and initially planned to last 6 meetings.

Results: Soon there were 4 adolescents who had engaged with the group and requested to increase the number of sessions. Psychodynamic issues emerged during the sessions, which were well evaluated by all participants after 10 weeks, when the group had to be ended due to the completion of sentences of 3 participants. In 2009 only 3 of them were found. The first reported a relapse, but remains abstinent. The second started working as general assistant and remained abstinent. The third continued to consume crack and was arrested by the time he was 18.

Conclusions: This study showed the need for specific treatment for the group of juvenile offenders. Operative and informative groups create a communication space for drug users and other psychotic subjects. It permits group identification and allows the expression of mental suffering. Therefore this practice consists of a low complexity approach in an extremely vulnerable population, which is so prevalent in developing countries such as Brazil.