

COOKING WORKSHOPS: CONTRIBUTION FOR PEOPLE WITH MENTAL ILLNESS

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Introduction

The development of activities for therapeutic purposes, namely workshops, has proved to be important in the psychosocial rehabilitation of people with mental illness.

Objective

To assess and monitor the impact of the IN_Cooking project, an initiative which aims to provide solutions for psychosocial rehabilitation of people suffering from mental health through the development of culinary skills.

Methods

- Within the scope of the IN_Cooking project, a study was developed with 24 individuals monitored in a psychiatric day hospital service who attended the Cooking Workshops for 6 weeks, in groups of 6 participants.
- The Self-esteem Scale (SESR), the AQ-9 Stigma in Mental Illness Scale, and the Internalised Stigma in People with Mental Illness Scale (ISMI) were applied before and after the attendance of the project.
- A multivariate statistical analysis was performed for a 5% significance level. Non-parametric Wilcoxon test, parametric paired t-test, Shapiro-Wilk test and skewness coefficient were used.

Results

- The sample was equally distributed by gender.
- Participants were between 21 and 70 years-old. The mean age was 38,27 years-old (Standard-Deviation 13,90). Men's median age was 34 years-old, whereas women's was 42 (Inter-quartil range for both was 24,5).
- 75% were single; 21% married or co-habiting with a partner and 4% were divorced.
- 8,33% received higher education; 54,17% completed 6th or 9th grade (Portuguese education system) and 4,17% completed 4th grade.

- Significant differences were found in the three outcomes considered: self-esteem, mental health stigma and internalized stigma, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Statistic results

Scale	1st assessment		2nd assessment		p-value	Statistical Test
	Mean	SD**	Mean	SD**		
SESR	1,52	0,22	1,98	0,17	0,0059*	Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test
AQ-9	4,17	1,69	2,65	1,13	0,0015*	Paired T-Test
ISMI	2,59	0,28	2,10	0,14	<0,0010*	Paired T-Test

Conclusion

The Cooking Workshops proved to be a therapeutic strategy with a positive impact, with improvements in participants' self-esteem, mental illness stigma and self-stigma.

