

ANALYSIS OF THE ROLE OF CAPS IN THE TREATMENT OF SEVERE MENTAL DISORDERS:AN INTEGRATIVE REVIEW

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Abstract: The aim of this study is to describe national scientific research from 2018 to 2022 on the role played by Psychosocial Care Centers (CAPS) in the treatment of severe mental disorders. An integrative literature review was conducted to examine the Brazilian scientific production related to CAPS activities for individuals affected by these disorders. The articles were captured in the SciELO, LILACS, Scopus, Web of Science and Medline databases. The studies recognize that the Psychosocial Care Centers (CAPS) are an effective option in the treatment of severe psychic disorders, promoting a unified, humanized and individualized perspective. The strengthening and expansion of the CAPS network is necessary to improve the assistance provided to patients and to boost deinstitutionalization and social integration.

Keywords: “Psychosocial Care Center”, “severe mental disorders”, “treatment”.

INTRODUCTION

Severe mental disorders represent a major public health challenge, affecting the quality of life of millions of people around the world.¹ They are one of the main causes of disability and suffering worldwide, in addition to affecting not only the quality of life of people who experience them, but also of their families and communities². In addition to debilitating symptoms, individuals who suffer from these conditions face social stigmas and may have difficulty accessing adequate healthcare.

In this context, Psychosocial Care Centers (CAPS) emerge as an important treatment alternative for these patients. Psychosocial Care Centers (CAPS) are specialized mental health services that offer daily and intensive care for people with severe mental disorders³. These disorders include psychoses, severe affective disorders, chemical dependency, among others⁴. With multidisciplinary teams and diverse therapeutic approaches, the CAPS

have stood out in providing comprehensive and humanized care for people with severe mental disorders.

However, it is necessary to analyze the role of CAPS in this context, in order to assess its effectiveness, identify the challenges faced by professionals in the area and contribute to the construction of more effective public policies. The general objective of this article is to characterize the role of the Psychosocial Care Center (CAPS) in the treatment of severe mental disorders.

The specific objectives are the following: to identify the challenges faced by professionals who work in CAPS in the treatment of severe mental disorders; evaluate the effectiveness of CAPS in the treatment of severe mental disorders; to verify the importance of comprehensive and humanized care offered by the CAPS in the psychosocial rehabilitation and social reintegration of patients; contribute to the construction of more effective public policies for mental health, in view of the essential role of CAPS in this area.

The performance of the CAPS, through a multidisciplinary approach, can contribute to the reduction of hospitalization and the stigma related to serious disorders, promoting the rehabilitation and social insertion of patients.

THEORETICAL REFERENCE

The Psychosocial Care Center (CAPS) is a mental health service that aims to provide comprehensive care and attention to people with serious mental disorders, such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, schizoaffective disorder, among others. The CAPS is a mental health care strategy that seeks to promote users' autonomy and protagonism, through a humanized and integral approach.

The CAPS approach to the treatment of severe mental disorders is guided by a multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary perspective, which involves professionals

from different areas, such as psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, occupational therapists, among others. The CAPS team seeks to understand the uniqueness of each user and their specific needs, offering personalized and individualized care.

Several studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of CAPS in the treatment of severe mental disorders. A study carried out by Ochoa et al.⁵ evaluated the impact of treatment in a CAPS on the quality of life of patients with schizophrenia. The results showed that CAPS treatment improved the patients' quality of life and reduced the number of psychiatric hospitalizations.

Another study carried out by Cunha et al.⁶ evaluated the impact of CAPS in the treatment of patients with bipolar disorder. The results showed that CAPS treatment significantly reduced the patients' depressive and manic symptoms, improving their quality of life and reducing the need for hospitalization.

In addition, CAPS plays an important role in the deinstitutionalization of patients with severe mental disorders. Instead of keeping these patients in psychiatric hospitals for long periods, the CAPS offers a more welcoming and humanized care environment, promoting the social and community reintegration of users.⁷ Therefore, the Psychosocial Care Center plays a fundamental role in the treatment of mental disorders, serious mental disorders, providing a humanized, personalized and interdisciplinary service, which promotes the recovery and social reintegration of users.

A possible gap in the literature on the role of CAPS in the treatment of severe mental disorders is the lack of studies investigating the effectiveness of the CAPS approach compared to other forms of treatment, such as psychiatric hospitalization. Although there is evidence that CAPS treatment is effective and can improve patients' quality of life, further comparative studies are still needed to assess

its effectiveness in different contexts.

In research conducted by O. Teferra et al.⁸, the authors conclude that most studies on the effectiveness of community-based mental health services (such as CAPS) for severe mental disorders are of poor quality and that more research is needed. to determine the effectiveness of these services in different contexts.

The analysis of the role of CAPS in the treatment of severe mental disorders can contribute to the academic community in several ways. First, by gathering and systematizing information on the subject, it is possible to generate new knowledge and deepen understanding of the CAPS approach and its effectiveness in the treatment of severe mental disorders. In addition, the analysis can help identify gaps in the literature and point out areas that need further research and investigation. This can guide researchers and professionals in the field of mental health to develop studies and interventions that are more effective and adequate to the needs of patients.

Another benefit is the possibility of disseminating knowledge and good practices to mental health professionals and public policy managers. The analysis can be used as a basis for the development of more effective public policies aimed at the needs of the population. Finally, the analysis of the role of CAPS in the treatment of severe mental disorders can contribute to the training of students and professionals in the field of mental health, providing up-to-date and well-founded information about this treatment approach.

METHODS

An integrative review was carried out in order to examine the Brazilian scientific production regarding the interventions of the Psychosocial Care Center (CAPS) in the

therapy of severe mental disorders. It was decided to perform an integrative review, conceptualized as a tool to collect and summarize findings of studies on a limited topic or question, in an orderly and systematic way, in order to contribute to the expansion of knowledge of the investigated subject.⁹. For the composition of the integrative review, the following phases were performed: formulation of the central question; establishment of key terms; definition of inclusion criteria; conducting searches in databases; choice of articles to integrate the review; establishing the information to be extracted from the selected studies; analysis and classification of the chosen studies; interpretation of results; and description and exposition of these. Data collection was carried out between January and March 2022.

The guiding question of the study was: What was the production in the national health scientific literature between 2018 and 2022 on the role of CAPS in the treatment of severe mental disorders? The study was conducted through a search in several databases and complementary sources. Articles were collected from the following databases: Scientific Electronic Library Online (SciELO), Latin American and Caribbean Literature in Health Sciences (LILACS), SciVerse Scopus, Web of Science, and Medical Literature Analysis and Retrieval System Online (Medline). In addition, searches were conducted in other sources, such as the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Ministry of Health (MOH). Papers that were identified in more than one database were excluded, being counted only once. The following inclusion criteria were established: studies that evaluated the effectiveness of the Psychosocial Care Center (CAPS) in the treatment of severe mental disorders; that included patients diagnosed with severe mental disorders, such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder,

schizoaffective disorder, among others; that described the interventions performed by CAPS in the treatment of severe mental disorders, such as occupational therapy, psychotherapy, pharmacotherapy, among others; published in Brazil, in Portuguese and English, from 2018 to 2022; made available in full and through public online access.

Studies that did not assess the role of the CAPS in the treatment of severe mental disorders, that involved patients with mental disorders not considered severe, such as anxiety or mild depression, that described interventions carried out by other mental health services in addition to the CAPS, and that were excluded were excluded. presented inadequate methodology or insufficient quality to answer the research question.

At search, they were used the following descriptors in Health Sciences (DeCS) in two languages (Portuguese/It is English), combined through the Boolean expressions 'or'/'and' with the following keywords: Center for Psychosocial Care", "severe mental disorders", "treatment (2018-2022).

After the search, articles whose titles were reviewed were identified and then the abstracts were analyzed to verify if they met the established inclusion criteria. After analyzing the abstracts of several publications found with controlled descriptors, studies that met the eligibility criteria were selected for a complete analysis.

RESULTS

The initial search resulted in 65 articles. Among the articles, those that were not available in full, duplicates, those not related to the research question and those that did not meet the eligibility criteria were excluded (**Figure 1**), resulting in the final inclusion of 36 articles.

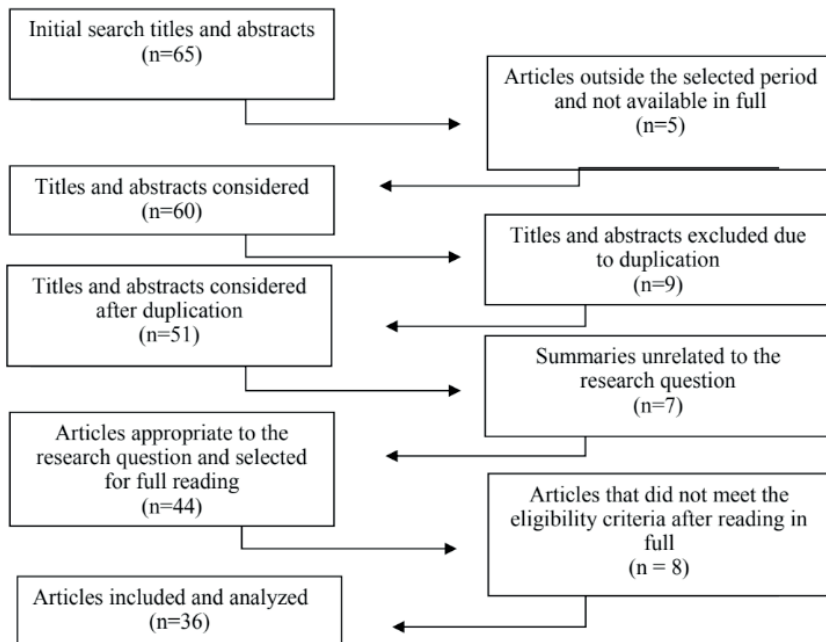


Figure 1 – Flowchart of bibliographic research results in Medline and Scielo databases, LILACS, Web of Science and Scopus.

CHALLENGES FACED BY PROFESSIONALS WORKING AT CAPS IN THE TREATMENT OF SEVERE MENTAL DISORDERS

Psychosocial Care Centers (CAPS) face several challenges related to lack of financial resources and adequate infrastructure, which can affect the quality of care offered to patients with severe mental disorders. Among these challenges, the scarcity of hospital beds, the lack of a qualified multidisciplinary team, the lack of access to specialized medicines and materials, the inadequacy of the physical spaces of the CAPS to care for these patients, in addition to the difficulty in implementing programs stand out. of psychosocial rehabilitation and therapeutic activities^{10,11,12,13,14}.

In addition, CAPS also need to have an interdisciplinary team capable of providing quality care to patients suffering from severe mental disorders. However, training and updating professionals can be challenging due to the need for specialization in different severe mental disorders and specific intervention techniques, in addition to the limited availability of training and updating programs. It is equally important for professionals to be up to date with scientific and technological advances in the field of mental health, as well as to develop specific skills to deal with serious mental disorders. Investments in research and public policies are needed to improve the care provided to patients with severe mental disorders^{10,11,15}.

Another interesting point is that the integration of CAPS into an effective care network can present challenges, such as the lack of coordination between mental health services (general hospitals, urgent and emergency services and social assistance), which makes continuity of care more difficult. and adequate access to services by patients. These challenges also extend to the integration

of mental health professionals^{10,11,12,14,15}. CAPS face the challenge of fighting the stigma associated with severe mental disorders, which can lead to discrimination, social exclusion and marginalization of patients, impairing their quality of life and commitment to treatment. In addition, stigma can influence the perception of CAPS by the community and other health services, which affects the availability of resources and support necessary for its proper functioning. Additionally, the lack of social and family support, accompanied by difficulties in socio-professional reintegration, are additional obstacles faced in CAPS. Stigma can have a negative impact on the attitude of mental health professionals when dealing with patients and on their adherence to treatment^{10,11,16,17}. The need for a community approach is evident in CAPS, which seek to promote comprehensive and integrated care, leaving behind the old asylum and institutionalized model. However, the implementation of this approach may encounter obstacles, such as the scarcity of resources and adequate infrastructure in communities, the community's resistance to receiving mental health services and the need to involve other sectors, such as education, work and housing, to ensure the social inclusion of patients. A more patient-focused approach is also needed in CAPS, with the stimulation of autonomy, active patient involvement in planning their treatment and recognition of their personal preferences and needs¹⁰.

Severe mental disorders, such as schizophrenia and bipolar disorder, require specialized treatment approaches in Psychosocial Care Centers (CAPS). However, many CAPS face challenges in providing adequate services for these patients. Clinical challenges include the complexity of the symptoms, the need for multidisciplinary interventions, the management of acute attacks,

the coordination of different therapeutic approaches, the promotion of adherence to treatment and the prevention of relapses. The therapeutic resources available at CAPS may be limited, including the availability of medications, specific therapies and resources for psychosocial rehabilitation^{12,16,17}.

The integration of mental health professionals and articulation with other services in the health network also represent challenges. The lack of a specialized multidisciplinary team can make patient management difficult, and medication management can be challenging due to constant dosage adjustments and adverse side effects^{11,14,16}. Additionally, the excessive workload can result in exhaustion and exhaustion of mental health professionals, negatively affecting the quality of care provided to patients¹⁴. The interdisciplinarity and coordination of care in CAPS present challenges. The mental health professionals who work in these centers work in a multidisciplinary team, but face difficulties in coordinating different therapeutic approaches, in communication between team members, in the definition of roles and responsibilities, and in the integration of different visions and professional practices. The lack of integration and adequate coordination between professionals can hinder the effective treatment of severe mental disorders^{13,18}.

The relationship with patients and their families is also one of the challenges, involving the creation of a bond of trust with patients, fostering adherence to treatment, managing critical situations and supporting families. Mental health professionals face obstacles in establishing effective communication, managing challenging patient behaviors, and providing appropriate support to families caring for individuals with severe mental disorders. Furthermore, it is essential to establish a solid therapeutic relationship

with patients and encourage adherence to treatments^{13,18}. Finally, it is worth highlighting the obstacle related to the lack of adequate public policies and the lack of sufficient financial resources for the CAPS. The lack of investment in the area of mental health, the lack of policies directed towards the care of severe mental disorders and the lack of recognition and appreciation for the work of professionals may represent considerable challenges in the search for effective treatment¹⁸

EFFECTIVENESS OF CAPS IN THE TREATMENT OF MENTAL DISORDERS

A study carried out by Sanches et al. investigated the effectiveness of a psychoeducational intervention program at a Psychosocial Care Center (CAPS) in São Paulo, Brazil, for patients with severe mental disorders. The results showed that the program was effective in reducing psychiatric symptoms, improving the participants' quality of life and adherence to treatment. The authors point out that psychoeducational intervention is a useful and viable strategy in the treatment of severe mental disorders in community mental health centers, such as CAPS. These centers already have mental health professionals, such as psychologists and social workers, who can conduct these interventions. Therefore, CAPS play an important role in the treatment of these disorders, especially when combined with effective psychoeducational interventions¹⁹.

In another study, there is evidence that CAPS are effective in the treatment of severe mental disorders, especially when combined with other strategies, such as the use of medication and psychotherapy. They emphasize that the effectiveness of treatment depends on the capacity of CAPS to offer comprehensive and individualized care to patients, taking into consideration their social and cultural reality²⁰.

There is evidence that these centers are able to reduce hospital admissions, reduce the use of drugs and alcohol by patients and improve the quality of life of users. They have been effective in treating serious mental disorders, such as schizophrenia and bipolar disorder, when combined with other therapeutic strategies, such as the use of medication. The effectiveness of the treatment offered by CAPS depends on the ability of these centers to offer individualized and integrated care to patients, considering their particularities and needs. In addition, it is important that the CAPS have a qualified multidisciplinary team in sufficient numbers to meet the demand of users ²¹.

A survey conducted by Ferreira *et al.* analyzes the effectiveness of the Psychosocial Care Center (CAPS) in the rehabilitation of patients with severe mental disorders and the results indicate that the CAPS have been shown to be effective in the treatment of individuals who suffer from such disorders, enabling their psychosocial rehabilitation, the improvement in quality of life and functional capacity, in addition to reducing the number of hospital admissions. However, the researchers highlight the need for more research to assess the effectiveness of CAPS in the long term, as well as the importance of improving the mental health care model to ensure access and quality of care ²². Another survey published by Guimarães *et al.* presents a patients' perspective on the effectiveness of the treatment offered by the CAPS for severe mental disorders. The authors point out that patients reported the importance of welcoming and active listening by mental health professionals, as well as the importance of drug treatment and group therapies. According to the patients' reports, the treatment offered by the CAPS was effective in improving the symptoms of severe mental disorders, such as hallucinations, delusions and depression, in addition to providing a safe and welcoming environment. Patients

highlighted the importance of regular follow-up, adherence to treatment and support from the multidisciplinary team for their recovery ²³.

Therefore, CAPS can be an effective alternative in the treatment of severe mental disorders, providing a more humanized and integrated approach, with the possibility of individualized interventions and group therapies, in addition to ensuring closer monitoring of patients.

IMPORTANCE OF COMPREHENSIVE AND HUMANIZED CARE OFFERED BY CAPS IN PSYCHOSOCIAL REHABILITATION AND SOCIAL REINTEGRATION OF PATIENTS

The comprehensive and humanized care offered by the Psychosocial Care Center (CAPS) plays a key role in the psychosocial rehabilitation and social reintegration of patients with severe mental disorders. Patients often experience significant difficulties in areas such as work, relationships, and everyday activities. The comprehensive and humanized care offered by the CAPS is essential for the psychosocial rehabilitation and social reintegration of patients with severe mental disorders, and the multidisciplinary approach adopted by the CAPS allows professionals to work in an integrated manner, providing support in different aspects of patients' lives, such as health, employment, housing, education and leisure ²⁴.

A study conducted by Ribeiro *et al.* points out that the CAPS model of care, which aims at psychosocial rehabilitation and social reintegration of patients, is more humane and integrated than the traditional model of mental health care centered in the psychiatric hospital. They emphasize that CAPS care must be multidisciplinary and involve the active participation of patients and their families ²⁵.

On the other hand, Fontanella *et*

al. highlight the importance of the comprehensive and humanized care offered by the CAPS in the deinstitutionalization of mental health care. They mention that the CAPS provide a multidisciplinary, welcoming treatment, with active listening and respect for the particularities of the patients, which contributes to the psychosocial rehabilitation and social reintegration of individuals with severe mental disorders²⁶.

Two other studies highlight the importance of comprehensive and humanized care at Psychosocial Care Centers (CAPS) for the psychosocial rehabilitation and social reintegration of patients suffering from severe mental disorders. The authors emphasize the need for a multidisciplinary and integrated approach, which considers the individual needs of each patient and the particularities of each care context. In addition, they highlight the active participation of patients in the care process, with the aim of developing a personalized therapeutic plan and promoting the autonomy and empowerment of service users. Both studies suggest that the treatment offered by the CAPS, through this care model, contributes to the improvement of the clinical status of the patients and their reintegration into society^{27,28}.

As addressed by Rodrigues et al., there is an importance of the Psychosocial Care Center (CAPS) in the effectiveness of the treatment of severe mental disorders and in the social inclusion of patients. The authors emphasize the relevance of the broad and humanized care offered by the CAPS, which encompasses several health professionals, the participation of the family and the community, as an essential factor for psychosocial rehabilitation and the reintegration of patients into society. Additionally, they highlight the need for coordination between mental health services and other services, both public and private, in order to ensure complete and continuous care

for patients with severe mental disorders²⁹.

CONSTRUCTION OF MORE EFFECTIVE PUBLIC POLICIES FOR MENTAL HEALTH

CAPS are an essential element in the construction of effective public policies for mental health. They have the potential to improve access to mental health services, strengthen community involvement, and promote a more humane and integrated approach to mental health care. In Brazil, the growth and expansion of CAPS has been driven by a strong commitment to deinstitutionalization and community-based care, as well as recognition of the need to address the social determinants of mental health. CAPS are seen as fundamental to the development of a comprehensive mental health care system that can meet the needs of a diverse population with a variety of mental health conditions³⁰.

One study discussed the role of Psychosocial Care Centers (CAPS) in building effective public policies for mental health in Brazil. One of them emphasizes the importance of a user- and community-centered approach, adequate and sustainable financing, improvement in the education and training of mental health professionals, increased access to services and integration of CAPS with other mental health services and with the community.³⁰ Another study highlights the need to invest in substitute mental health care services, such as CAPS, to promote deinstitutionalization. This requires greater political commitment to expand and improve these services³¹. Another article mentions the National Policy on Mental Health and the Policy for the Humanization of Care and Management of the SUS as relevant to the creation of more effective public policies in the field of mental health. In addition, it emphasizes the importance of strengthening and expanding the network of Psychosocial

Care Centers (CAPS) across the country as a government policy aimed at improving the care offered to individuals with severe mental disorders.³²

The implementation of public policies that promote the integration and articulation of mental health services, especially in relation to urgent and emergency services, is considered urgent.³³ The construction of a comprehensive psychosocial care network, which includes actions for the prevention, promotion and treatment of serious mental disorders, is also emphasized³⁴.

DISCUSSION

In this discussion, the studies chosen in the time interval between 2018 and 2022 are contemplated, together with other publications that can add to the discernment of the exposed information. In examining the currently reported outcomes, it is possible to add a little more context to the CAPS trajectory.

The CAPS had its origins in the 1980s, a period in which the psychiatric reform began to gain strength in the country. The reform sought to overcome the asylum model of treatment, which was based on prolonged hospitalization and isolation of patients in psychiatric hospitals. The objective was to promote the social inclusion and reintegration of individuals with severe mental disorders into society. In this context, CAPS emerged as an alternative to psychiatric hospitals, offering a model of community and comprehensive care. They were conceived as substitute services, with an interdisciplinary and user-centered approach. The objective was to provide humanized care, with a focus on psychosocial rehabilitation and the promotion of patients' autonomy.

Over the years, CAPS experienced a process of expansion and improvement. New variants of CAPS were established with the

purpose of meeting different demands and patient profiles, such as CAPS I (designed for daytime care), CAPS II (focused on night care) and CAPS III (with uninterrupted care of 24 hours, including reception beds). These variants are intended to provide a broader care network adapted to the needs of the population.

CAPS has played a key role in promoting the deconstruction of the asylum model and the implementation of a more humanized and integrated care model, based on community mental health care. Among the advances mentioned are the expansion of the coverage of CAPS services throughout the national territory, the diversification of the types of care available, the active participation of users in the formulation of mental health policies, the interconnection with other devices of the psychosocial care network, as well as the implementation of more effective therapeutic practices focused on psychosocial rehabilitation. These advances have contributed to the improvement of the quality of life and social reintegration of individuals affected by severe mental disorders, promoting a more inclusive and welcoming approach to mental health in Brazil³⁵.

A study that addresses the evolution of CAPS in Brazil revealed significant results and advances over time. Among them, the expansion of CAPS coverage stands out throughout the country, which allows greater access to specialized services by individuals with severe mental disorders. In addition, CAPS play a key role in strengthening the psychosocial care network, integrating with other mental health services and contributing to a broader and more effective coverage³⁶.

Another important advance is the implementation of effective therapeutic practices, based on evidence and focused on psychosocial rehabilitation. This includes

offering therapeutic groups, individual follow-up, social inclusion activities and family support, which have shown to be effective in improving the quality of life and social reintegration of individuals with severe mental disorders, in addition to seeking the active participation of users in building of mental health policies and practices, promoting a more inclusive approach that respects the needs and preferences of the individuals served³⁶.

This article revealed considerable limitations. The dearth of studies addressing the role of CAPS in the treatment of severe mental disorders has limited the pool of accessible evidence. In addition, measuring the results associated with the effectiveness of the CAPS in this treatment proved to be complicated, encompassing multiple variables and subjectivity in the evaluation of outcomes.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The results of this study highlighted that Psychosocial Care Centers (CAPS) are of paramount importance in the treatment of severe mental disorders. Several challenges affect the quality of care, such as lack of financial resources, inadequate infrastructure, shortage of hospital beds and qualified multidisciplinary team, limited access to specialized drugs and materials, among others.

On the other hand, several studies demonstrate the effectiveness of CAPS in the treatment of severe mental disorders. These centers have been able to reduce psychiatric symptoms, improve patients' quality of life, increase adherence to treatment, and decrease drug and alcohol use. The effectiveness of the treatment depends on the capacity of the CAPS to provide individualized and integrated care, taking into consideration, the patients' needs. The multidisciplinary approach, welcoming, active listening and group therapies are

highlighted as fundamental.

CAPS play an essential role in the psychosocial rehabilitation and social reintegration of patients, offering comprehensive and humanized care. The active participation of patients, the development of personalized treatment plans and coordination with other mental health services and the community are highlighted as important elements. In addition, the construction of effective public policies in mental health, including adequate funding, training of professionals and integration of services, is highlighted as necessary.

In short, CAPS represent an effective alternative in the treatment of severe mental disorders, promoting an integrated, humane and personalized approach. The strengthening and expansion of the CAPS network are essential to improve the care offered to patients and promote deinstitutionalization and social inclusion.

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