Gender differences in patient and caregiver psychoeducation for schizophrenia.

Objective: The aim of this research is to detect gender-related differences in patients and caregivers regarding knowledge about schizophrenia and attitudes towards drugs as well as gender as predictor for changes in these variables during psychoeducation. METHODS: Data sets of one randomised-controlled (study 1) and one naturalistic psychoeducation study (study 2) were reanalysed. Main outcome measures (knowledge about schizophrenia, drug attitude, confidence in medication) were assessed at baseline, post-intervention and 12 months after index discharge. RESULTS: The reanalysed samples consisted in total of 1002 patients and 176 caregivers. In study 2, baseline knowledge was significantly better in male patients and female caregivers. All participants improved significantly their knowledge. The amount of knowledge gain did not differ between genders in either study or either group. Gender was not a major predictor of baseline knowledge or knowledge gain. Only in study 1 did gender significantly impact the knowledge gain from baseline to follow-up. Regarding improvement of drug attitude, females seemed to benefit significantly better from psychoeducation. In both studies, however, changes in drug attitudes respectively confidence in medication were best explained by lower corresponding baseline scores, not gender. Patients’ gender did not influence outcomes of their caregivers.
CONCLUSION: Our findings suggest that psychoeducational programs might be better adapted to males in order to improve their drug attitude. Concerning knowledge, gender-related changes do not seem to be necessary.