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## CASE REPORT

### Child protection network and the intersector implementation of the circle of security as alternatives to medication<sup>☆</sup>

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Received 24 November 2013; accepted 16 February 2014

#### KEYWORDS

Medication;  
Child;  
Primary healthcare;  
Psychotherapy

#### Abstract

**Objectives:** To describe the clinical history of a child with aggressive behavior and recurring death-theme speech, and report the experience of the team of authors, who proposed an alternative to medication through the establishment of a protection network and the inter-sector implementation of the circle of security concept.

**Case description:** A 5-year-old child has a violent and aggressive behavior at the day-care. The child was diagnosed by the healthcare center with depressive disorder and behavioral disorder, and was medicated with sertraline and risperidone. Side effects were observed, and the medications were discontinued. Despite several actions, such as talks, teamwork, psychological and psychiatric follow-up, the child's behavior remained unchanged.

**Remarks:** A unique therapeutic project was developed by Universidade Estadual de Campinas' Medical School students in order to establish a connection between the entities responsible for the child's care (daycare center, healthcare center, and family). Thus, the team was able to develop a basic care protection network. The implementation of the inter-sector circle of security, as well as the communication and cooperation among the teams, produced very favorable results in this case. This initiative was shown to be a feasible and effective alternative to the use of medication for this child.

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DOI refers to: 10.1590/1984-0462201432316

<sup>☆</sup>Study conducted at Universidade Estadual de Campinas, Campinas, SP, Brazil.

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**PALAVRAS-CHAVE**

Palavras-chave  
Medicalização;  
Criança;  
Atenção primária à  
saúde;  
Psicoterapia

## A articulação da rede de proteção à criança e a aplicação intersetorial do círculo de segurança como alternativas à medicalização

**Resumo**

**Objetivos:** Descrever o caso clínico de uma criança que apresenta comportamento agressivo e fala recorrente do tema de morte, e relatar a experiência da equipe de autores na proposição de uma alternativa à medicalização por meio da formação de uma Rede de Proteção e da aplicação Intersectorial do conceito de Círculo de Segurança da Criança. **Descrição do caso:** Criança de 5 anos apresenta comportamento violento e agressivo na creche que frequenta. Foi diagnosticado pelo Centro de Saúde com Transtorno Depressivo e Transtorno de Conduta, sendo medicado com Sertralina e Risperidona. Apresentou efeitos colaterais, interrompendo o uso das medicações. Apesar de ações como conversas, trabalho em grupos, acompanhamento psicológico e psiquiátrico, a criança manteve esse comportamento.

**Comentários:** Foi desenvolvido um Projeto Terapêutico Singular por alunos do curso de Medicina da Universidade Estadual de Campinas (UNICAMP) com o objetivo de criar um vínculo entre as instituições responsáveis pelo cuidado da criança (Creche, Centro de Saúde e família), o que possibilitou o desenvolvimento de uma rede de proteção para o cuidado na Atenção Básica. A aplicação intersectorial do Círculo de Segurança, assim como a comunicação e a colaboração entre as equipes, mostrou resultados muito positivos neste caso, configurando-se como uma alternativa acessível e eficaz à Medicalização da criança.

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**Introduction**

The medicalization of childhood is one of the most discussed topics in the current pediatric setting. Children whose behavior does not correspond to that expected by school and society are perceived as suffering from organic diseases, including psychotic disorders.<sup>1</sup>

Collares and Moysés<sup>2</sup> define pathologization as “the search for medical causes and solutions, at an organicistic and individual level, to problems eminently of social origin”, and medicalization as “the process of transforming non-medical issues, eminently of social and political origin, into medical issues, that is, trying to find in the medical field causes and solutions for problems of this nature”. They state that the medicalization “occurs according to a conception of medical science that discusses the health-disease process as focused on the individual, favoring the biological, organicistic approach”.<sup>2</sup> It is, therefore, an omission on the part of medical institutions, school, and family in relation to problems of emotional and psychological nature. As a result of stigmatization, blaming and authoritarian attitudes are taken, attributing to the behavioral problem purely organic causes, without having investigated the real reason for the aggressive posture or hyperactivity.<sup>1,3</sup>

The concept of “circle of security”, proposed by Marvin *et al.*,<sup>4</sup> corresponds to an early intervention in the relationships between the child and their caregivers in order to provide adequate emotional support during childhood. The theory helps in the observation of the different ways in which children approach adults when demanding support and attention, and how to teach them to make good use of the help they receive. Moreover, the circle contributes to

the perception of the real emotional issues present at the moment when the child modifies their behavior, helping the caregiver to identify the psychological and emotional demands that the child has difficulty expressing.

The circle of security diagram provides instructions to parents and professionals regarding the fundamental attitudes in creating a stable and safe environment for children to develop their emotions. They must have a safety base to be able to explore the world, with support for playing and protection. Then, a safe haven is necessary, to which the child can return when experiencing frustrating situations. At this moment, the adults should welcome the child and help them organize their feelings.<sup>4</sup> This theory is very useful for professionals who work with children of all ages, as it helps to create safe opportunities for the development of interpersonal relationships, and teaches strategies to help professionals to present themselves as more emotionally available when approached by children.

The concept of protection network,<sup>5</sup> in turn, must be understood as an integrated action among institutions to treat children and adolescents at personal risk situations - for instance, under threat and violation of rights by abandonment, physical and psychological violence, or neglect situations that cause physical and emotional damage. Thus, a functional and effective network protection gives the child the possibility of growing, free from social risks and domestic violence.

In this context, this study consisted of the report of an individual therapeutic project aimed to investigate and intervene on the different aspects of the management in the care of the child in question, focusing on the creation of an intersectorial link between health (healthcare center [HC]), education (daycare center), and family, aiming to

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