John Nash and the esquizofrenia

He could not believe it, John had to look twice at the newspaper in front of him, if he analyzed the position of the letters following the same pattern, everything fit, the suspicions of the Pentagon high position that had contacted him were confirmed, it was taking place a conspiracy against the government. Thus, began the hallucinations of the renowned mathematician John Nash (1928 -2015), which prevented him for many years to continue their contributions to their field of study. After discovering that all those people related to the conspiracy only existed in his mind, John was diagnosed with schizophrenia. It began to be part of almost 1% of the world population that suffers from this disease (Mental Health America, 2018), a disease that hinders the integration of people in society. But what is schizophrenia and what produces it? Is there any treatment?

Schizophrenia is a mental disorder that affects the perception and behavior of people. The person who has it has difficulty distinguishing between reality and what is not real (Mental Health America, 2018). This causes it to be difficult to maintain a normal life, at work or to take care of themselves. Many studies suggest the existence of a genetic component that may predispose to the disease, but that this is not enough to trigger it, a series of external factors being necessary (Janssen-Cilag S.A., 2017). These may be changes in dream patterns, extremely tense situations linked to social, labor, high competitiveness, overwork or family problems. Also, the consumption of drugs such as cannabis, cocaine and amphetamines can increase the likelihood of suffering the disorder (Janssen-Cilag S.A., 2017). The causes are attributed as a result of high levels of stress, being the genetic factor or the consumption of drugs, agents that increase their possibilities.

To detect the disease, there is still no analytical or imaging test available to confirm the diagnosis. The means used is a clinical interview conducted by a psychiatrist in which symptoms are sought and questions related to work, family and friends are made. It is possible to observe in the patient, before the symptoms worsen, a decrease in concentration, sadness, increases in anxiety, difficulty in sleeping and isolation of families and friends. The psychiatrist will be guided by the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) of the American Psychiatric Association and the International Classification of Diseases (ICD) of the World Health Organization (WHO) (Janssen-Cilag SA, 2017). MRI scans may be performed to rule out other diseases with similar symptoms (U.S. National Library of Medicine, 2017).

The symptoms are shown through their behavior, varying from one person to another, they are divided between positive symptoms and negative symptoms. Positive symptoms appear as traits added to the personality. They can manifest through hallucinations, which can involve any of the five senses, hear, see or feel things that are not in reality, that only the person perceives. You can also see delusions, irrational beliefs showing inability to distinguish the real from the imaginary and disorganized and illogical thinking, agitation and tense state. Negative symptoms are characterized by an affective decrease, impoverishment of their mood and their social relationships. The person seems to have lost abilities such as social interaction, initiatives, emotional sensitivity and enthusiasm (Mental Health America, 2018).

Although there is no cure for schizophrenia, it is possible to treat it and seek to diminish its effects. Symptoms can be reduced with drugs, psychotherapy and family support (National Alliance on Mental Illness, 2018). Patients diagnosed with a personality disorder often suffer from discrimination and stigma in society, which, together with the characteristics of the condition, makes their situation worse. However, at present more tolerance has been seen, mainly in young people or educated people. Having knowledge about the disease and meeting affected people eliminates fear and preconceptions. Therefore, progress is made in the treatment, since patients who have the support of family and friends manage to experience a decrease in their symptoms (Janssen-Cilag S.A., 2017).

A short time ago, little was known about schizophrenia, and those affected were unable to reintegrate into society. Nowadays patients can have a relatively normal life if they comply with treatment, healthy diet, medicines and stay socially active (Janssen-Cilag S.A., 2017). With the support of his wife, and friends who motivated him to work in college, John Nash was able to control his hallucinations, and in 1994 he was awarded the Novel Prize for Economics for his contributions to game theory (BBC World, 2015). Nash inspired not only mathematicians but millions of people, his experiences were told in the movie released in 2001 by Universal Pictures with Dreamworks entitled A Bright Mind (A Beautiful Mind).

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