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“TELL TO THE CLOWNS THAT LOUIS IS DEAD AND THAT I STILL LOVE HIM”

Bereavement support provided by home-based clowns: a case study

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INTRODUCTION

- Experimental intervention of clowns for older adults at home, supported by the Mutualité Sociale Agricole - Midi Pyrénées Nord (MSA - MPN). From October 2022 to August 2024.
- In total, around twenty families had clown's visits in their homes.
- Clowns' interventions seems to have an impact on quality of life and agitation of the older adults (1)
- The general aim was to improve the quality of life and social link for isolated people, and relationship's quality with family carers if one exists.
- In this situation, interventions took place in a context of recent loss and social withdrawal. The aim of this study was to work on social links and expression of suffering (2)

OBJECTIVE

- Presentation of a case study:**
- How effective are the clown's interventions?
 - Are the methodological tools required to assess NPI are adapted for this situation (3)?

PARTICIPANTS

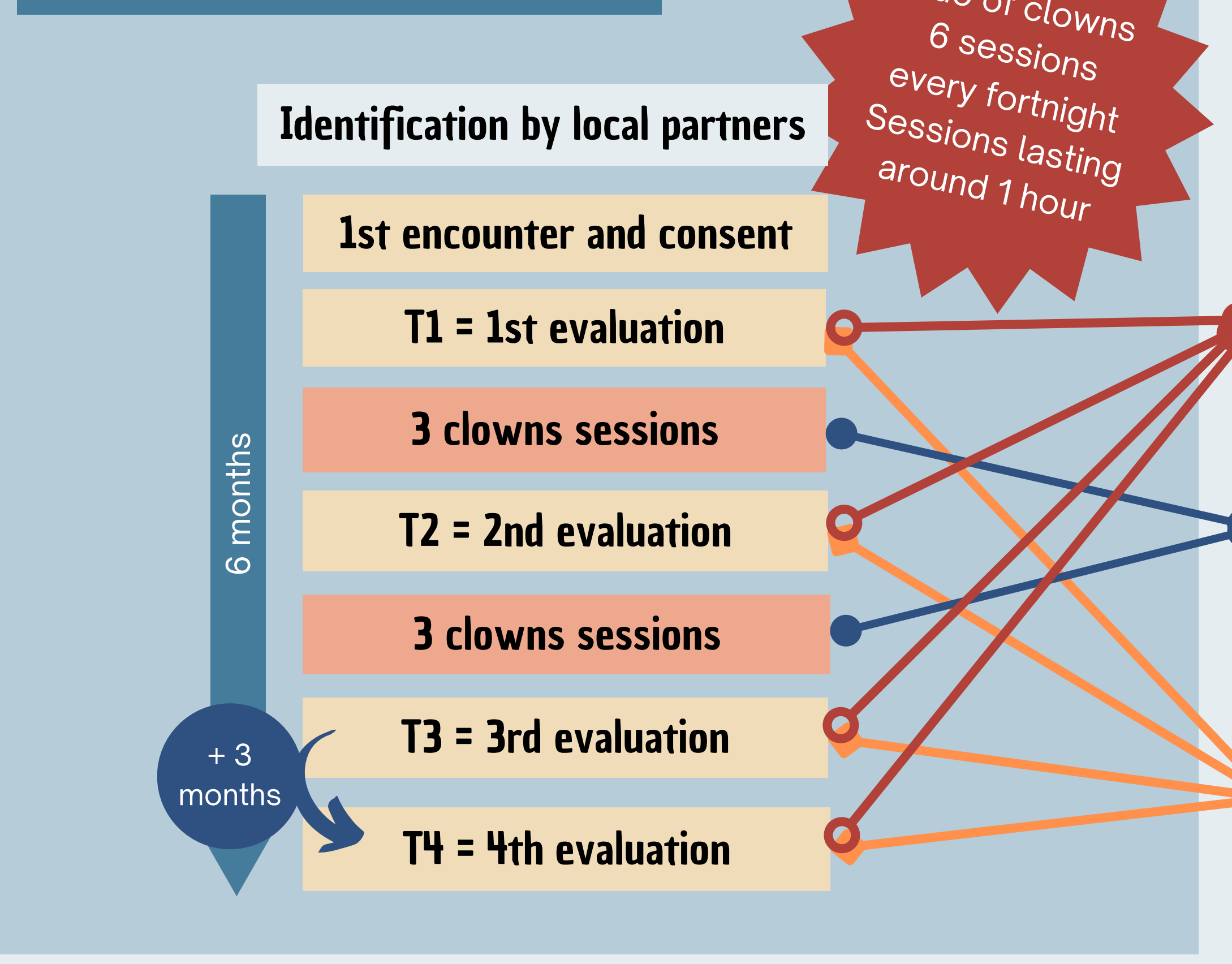
Nicole is 75 years old and has been widowed for two and a half months.

She used to work on a farm with **Louis**, her husband. Now, she lives accros the farm, wich is taken over by her youngest son, **Alex** (age 38) , and her daughter-in-law **Lauriane** in a adjoining house. They are both Nicole's caregivers.

She is slightly disoriented in time, but not spatially. Her attentional and recall capacities are impaired. Language skills and praxis are still preserved.

According to Alex and Lauriane, she has suffered from chronic depression for many years, aggravated by a succession of griefs. They feel that Louis's death has driven her deeper into this situation, and they feel powerless against Nicole.

EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN



METHODOLOGY

This study is a mixed-method (4), multiple-case study

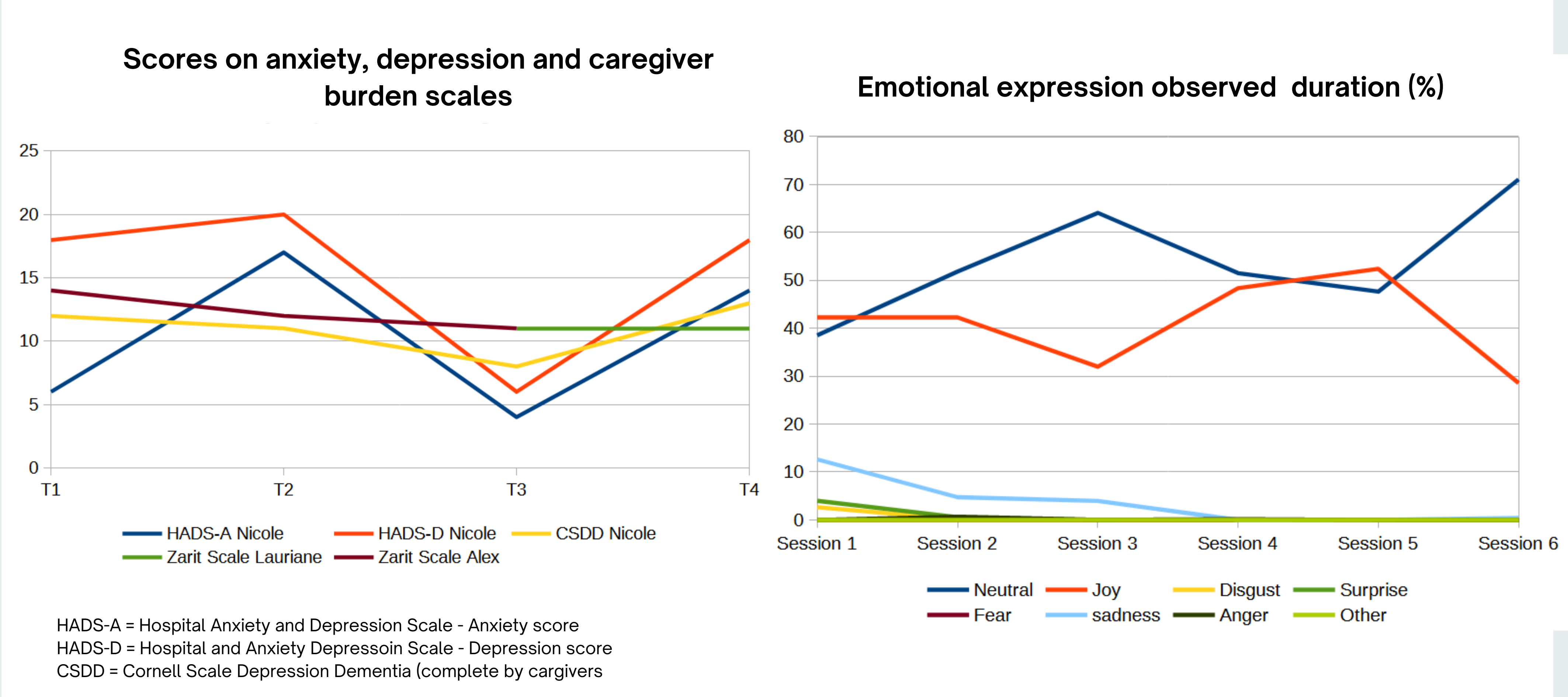
Quantitative tools:

- Validated scales: HADS (Self-evaluation of depression and anxiety), CSDD (hetero-evaluation of depression), Zarit (burden of caregivers)
- Observation grids with interjudge test - input on Actograph

Qualitative tool:

- Semi-structured interviews and content analysis

RESULTS



Interview thematic analysis

Theme 1: death - grief

- T1: Tell to the clowns that Louis is dead
- T3: Clowns even bounce off complicated subjects such as death
- T4: the subject of Louis' death was fluid and easy, with clowns

Theme 2: express oneself, be understood

- T2: clowns understand everything, you don't need to say anything
- T3: clowns? people who know how to get people talking and free their expression in a different way
- T4: it's easier to talk about it with clowns

Theme 3: effects

- T1: I'm afraid that it'll be a flop...
- T4: it changed things, but now I've lost the change now it's over, my heart closed up
- T4: it comforted me to know that she could confide in them ...but the effect is gone. So we need to continue with clowns

Theme 4: caregivers/Nicole relationship

- T2: I realized that my mom needs affection... I don't know how to give her We were all choked... we're in the same boat
- T4: Now I understand much better her hopelessness
- T3: it helped me to take a different approach with my mother

CONCLUSION

- ➔ The various indicators show fairly positive short-term effects. These effects seem to disappear rapidly.
- ➔ The clowns seem to have helped Nicole through her grief (5).
- ➔ Without long-term effects in this type of situation, are clowns inefficient? On the contrary, should we continue the interventions since they act, as caregivers conclude, but also like certain long-term treatments?
- ➔ We used the most rigorous methodology possible, but: No control group
Is the number of interventions ideal?

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