

CONNECTIONS BETWEEN UNRESOLVED ATTACHMENT TRAUMA AND RETROSPECTIVELY REMEMBERED CHILDHOOD TRAUMATISATION IN PSYCHOSOMATIC INPATIENTS

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Objective: In contrast to the organized secure (F) or insecure attachment (Ds, E) classifications (Ainsworth et al. 1969; George et al. 1985) by which consistent affective and behavioural patterns of attachment behaviour are described, the disorganized attachment status U (Main 1986) is characterised by inconsistencies in attachment related affect, thinking and behaviour. Populations in psychotherapeutic intreatment are characterised by a high prevalence of the disorganized attachment status (Fonagy et al 1996); there is also evidence for a high prevalence of childhood traumatisation in these patients. To date, there is little empirical evidence about the way in which a history of childhood traumatisation may interfere with actual attachment disorganisation and what impact the connection of these different types of trauma has on symptom formation and severity.

Methods and sample: Patients (n=46, main diagnoses: major depression, somatoform and eating disorders) were assessed with the AAP (Adult Attachment Projective), the CTQ (Childhood Trauma Questionnaire), the CATS (Child Abuse and Trauma Scale), self-report measures for symptom severity (SCL 90 R, STAI, BDI) and a measure for cognitive-emotional development (LEAS). Based on a correlation of 92% with the Adult Attachment Interview (AAI), the AAP is a reliable attachment measure; the CTQ and CATS are established self-report measures for retrospectively remembered emotional, physical, or sexual abuse in childhood.

Results: At admission, 50% of the patients presented a disorganised attachment status (U); among patients with an organized attachment status insecure-ambivalent attachment was dominant. The correlation between attachment status, severity of childhood traumatisation and symptom severity and formation will be presented and discussed.

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Session : oral/poster presentation ; preferred : oral presentation
for an oral presentation the technical equipment for a power-point-presentaion will be needed

main topic : clinical attachment research

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