

Poster presentation

Comparative assesment of alexithymic and general psychopathological manifestations between diabetics and end-stage renal disease patients on dialysis

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Background

The expressions of alexithymia have been positively correlated with chronic pain patients and patients of psychosomatic diseases as well as patients with protracted health problems. The purpose of this study is to explore possible differences between aspects of the alexithymia construct and general psychopathological indices comparing two groups of patients with chronic, diffuse symptomatology, diabetics and end-stage renal patients on dialysis.

Materials and methods

Fifty individuals, 29 men and 21 women, suffering from diabetes melitus, and thirty-six end-stage renal patients undergoing dialysis, 22 men and 14 women, completed the TAS-20 and SCL-90-R questionnaires. Mean age for the diabetics was 60.04 years ($s = 12.01$) while the level of education was assesed in years with the mean at 8.16 years ($s = 4.42$). Mean age for the renal patients was 56,8 years ($s = 14.9$) while the level of education had a mean value of 9.2 years ($s = 4.68$). Groups did not differ significantly on sex, age or years of education.

Results

After assesing mean differences between the two groups and with the aid of Student's t-tests and Mann-Whitney tests, results indicate that mean values for diabetics were higher on all aspects of the TAS-20 questionnaire and all but two factors of the SCL-90-R questionnaire, F6 (hostility) and F9 (psychoticism). However only the difference on the Positive Symptom Distress Index showed a statistically important difference ($t = 2.117$, $df = 84$, $p < 0.05$) suggesting a larger variance in the diabeticpatients com-

plaints and perceived distress. Failure to detect significant differences mirrors the low effect size which even for the PSDI index does not exceed the 0.5 range, explaining for 5% of the total variance in scores.

Discussion

Research groups differe significantly only with regards to the Positive Symptom Distress Index (PSDI) of the SCL-90-R questionnaire, with diabetics scoring higher on this index. It's safe to assume that the comparative difference of the two groups in the psychopathology indices which were explored, are of low clinical significance.