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**INVESTIGATING ATTACHMENT REPRESENTATIONS OF PATIENTS WITH BPD AND THE REGULATION OF OXYTOCIN IN HEALTHY PEOPLE: ADULT ATTACHMENT PROJECTIVE AS A CHALLENGE PARADIGM**

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**Objective:**

Attachment and companionship are fundamental basic needs of human beings and contribute the feeling of security and social affiliation. It is assumed that dysfunctional attachment behaviour in people with Borderline Personality Disorder leads to difficulties in the interpersonal contact. Unsecure and especially disorganized manners of attachment seem to be frequently represented by mentally ill people. In this study the release of oxytocin according to attachment relevant situations was investigated and attachment representations of people with BPD have been analysed.

**Methods:**

In order to determine attachment representations of healthy people and of people with BPD we used the validated '*Adult Attachment Projective*'/'AAP' by George, West and Pettem (1999). The projective contains eight contour drawings of attachment relevant situations. The participant should make up a story of each picture, which was evaluated by its coherence, its content and the used defence mechanisms. Attachment representations of 30 patients with BPD were surveyed. Furthermore we measured the release of oxytocin evoked by an activation of the attachment system via the 'AAP' in 10 healthy people. Therefor blood drawings were performed at four different points of time.

**Discussion:**

Here, we present pilot data on oxytocin measures induced via the 'AAP'. We could detect a decrease of oxytocin in healthy people caused by an activation of the attachment system. Moreover attachment representations of patients with BPD will be presented and discussed. These preliminary data could lead to further studies on a possible dysregulation of the attachment- and the oxytocin system of people with BPD.