
SEPARATION ANXIETY IN ADULT PATIENTS: FROM SYMPTOM CORRELATION TO OUTCOME PREDICTION

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Introduction

Adult Separation Anxiety Disorder (ASAD) is related to greater personal dysfunction and to a reduced sensitivity to conventional treatment, such as cognitive-behavioural therapy or anti-panic drugs, even considering severity of anxiety symptoms, number of co-morbid disorders, socio-economical status, disease duration, and severity of agoraphobia.

Objectives

To evaluate separation anxiety, psychiatric co-morbidity, levels of anxiety, character and temperament personality traits, and global functioning, in subjects with anxiety disorders attending a tertiary-level outpatient clinic.

Aims

To predict the outcome and customize treatment for anxiety disorders.

Methods

After symptom stabilization of one month (T0) 40 patients with anxiety disorders were assessed by means of SCI- SAS , SASI , ASA -27, MINI, HAM- A, TCI-R, GAF. Prospective evaluation is planned at T60 and T180.

Results

According to preliminary cross-sectional data, higher scores of separation anxiety show statistically significant correlations with some domains of the TCI-R; in addition, patients with ASAD show greater psychiatric co-morbidity. No correlations were found between the presence of separation anxiety and levels of anxiety at HAM-A or GAF scores at baseline.

Conclusions

The prospective study of long-term response to treatment is ongoing and the sample will be expanded. The comprehension of anxiety symptoms appraisal in the framework of psychobiological personality characteristics is expected to influence the choice of both pharmacological and psychological therapeutic tools, particularly in patients showing higher levels of dysfunction.

References

Bruschi A, De Angelis A, Grandinetti P, Pascucci M, Janiri L, Pozzi G. *Separation anxiety disorder: evidence of literature and clinical implications*. Riv Psichiatr. 2012 Sep-Oct;47(5):355-64.