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ALEXITHYMIA AND SUICIDE RISK AMONG PATIENTS WITH OBSESSIVE-COMPULSIVE DISORDER

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Objective: The aim of our study was to evaluate relationships between alexithymia and suicidal ideation a sample of adult outpatients with obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD).

Methods: A sample of 86 adult outpatients with OCD (44 females and 42 males), was evaluated with a series of rating scales such as the Yale-Brown Obsessive Compulsive Scale (Y-BOCS), the Toronto Alexithymia Scale (TAS-20), the Scale for Suicide Ideation (SSI) and Montgomery-Åsberg Depression Rating Scale (MADRS). The score of item #11 on the Y-BOCS was considered as a measure of insight.

Results: Alexithymics showed a more early onset, a longer duration of illness and were more suitable to have a chronic course than nonalexithymics; they also reported higher MADRS and SSI scores. Alexithymics without insight (n=21) reported higher SSI scores than alexithymics with insight, nonalexithymics without insight and nonalexithymics with insight. A linear regression showed that chronic OCD course together with DIF dimension of TAS-20 and higher MADRS scores were significantly associated with higher suicide risk.

Conclusions: Alexithymia and depressive symptoms were highly correlated in OCD patients and were significantly associated with higher suicide risk. DIF dimension of TAS-20 seems to be significantly associated with presence of suicidal ideation as well as chronic course of disorder. However, further longitudinal studies on larger samples are needed to definitely clarify this topic.