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Topic: EPO05 - "the dreamers": changes in european psychiatry over the last 10 years

Clinical Depression: is Treatment Outcome Impacted by Comorbid Depressive Personality?

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Introduction: Depressive/dysphoric personality (DP) is common in clinical settings, particularly among individuals with clinical depression.

Objectives: The purpose of this research was to examine DP in two treatment settings (Study 1 and Study 2, respectively), and to determine whether those with comorbid DP would respond differentially to antidepressant medication, psychotherapy, or their combination as compared to those without DP.

Aim: The specific aim of the study was to evaluate pre- to post-treatment changes in depression severity levels between those with and without DP.

Methods: Study 1: Six hundred eighty (N=680) psychiatric outpatients with chronic depression were randomized to receive antidepressant medication, cognitive behavioral psychotherapy, or their combination for 12 weeks. Patients with and without DP were statistically compared on changes in levels of depression severity from pre- to post-treatment. Study 2: One hundred fifty-nine (N=159) psychotherapy clients were naturalistically followed from pre-to post treatment (average 6.5 months). Clients with and without DP were statistically compared on changes in levels of depression severity from pre- to post-treatment.

Results: Thirty six percent (36%) of psychiatric outpatients and 44% of psychotherapy clients presented with DP at pre-treatment. There were no significant differences between those with and without DP on levels of depression severity in any treatment modality. In fact, among psychotherapy clients, those with DP made greater treatment gains than those without DP.

Conclusions: These findings suggest that in routine clinical situations, comorbid DP at pre-treatment should not be seen as an obstacle to successful treatment outcomes.