

## P02-304 - ALEXITHYMIA IS ASSOCIATED WITH EATING DISORDER SYMPTOMS IN ADOLESCENTS

M. Karukivi<sup>1,2</sup>, L. Hautala<sup>2,3</sup>, J. Korpelainen<sup>4</sup>, K.-M. Haapasalo-Pesu<sup>1</sup>, P.-R. Liuksila<sup>3</sup>, M. Joukamaa<sup>5,6</sup>, S. Saarijärvi<sup>2,7</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Unit of Adolescent Psychiatry, Satakunta Hospital District, Pori, <sup>2</sup>Unit of Adolescent Psychiatry, University of Turku, <sup>3</sup>Turku Municipal Health Care and Social Services, <sup>4</sup>Private, Turku, <sup>5</sup>Social Psychiatry Unit, Tampere School of Public Health, University of Tampere, <sup>6</sup>Department of Psychiatry, Tampere University Hospital, Tampere, <sup>7</sup>Unit of Adolescent Psychiatry, Hospital District of Southwest Finland, Turku, Finland

**Objectives:** Increasing amount of evidence indicates an association between alexithymia and eating disorder (ED) symptoms. The aim of this study was to evaluate possible association between alexithymia and EDs in a non-clinical sample of late adolescents.

**Methods:** The questionnaire was sent to 935 adolescents of whom 729 (78%) completed it, thus forming the final sample. The mean age in the sample was 19 years (range 17–21 years). Alexithymia was measured using the 20-item Toronto Alexithymia Scale (TAS-20) and ED symptoms were assessed using the SCOFF questionnaire, a novel tool for screening ED symptoms. A TAS-20 score of 61 or more was used as the cut-off point for classifying a subject as alexithymic, and for SCOFF, the cut-off point for a SCOFF positive subject was of two or more positive answers.

**Results:** The rate of alexithymia was 8.2% (8.2% for females and 8.5% for males). The mean TAS-20 scores were 44.65 for females and 45.98 for males without any gender difference. Among the alexithymic adolescents, the share of SCOFF positive subjects was significantly higher as compared to the non-alexithymic group (32.2% vs. 11.3%). The mean SCOFF scores also differed significantly between alexithymic and non-alexithymic subjects (0.93 vs. 0.42). The association was clear in the DIF and DDF subscales of TAS-20.

**Conclusions:** The results suggest that ED symptoms are more common in alexithymic adolescents. However, the evaluation of causal links calls for longitudinal studies.