Article: EPA-1336

Topic: P12 - Ethics and Psychiatry

## ETHICAL QUESTIONS AND DILEMMAS IN PSYCHOTHERAPY

## J. Vyskocilova<sup>1</sup>, J. Prasko<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Institute of Doctoral Studies, Faculty of Humanities Charles University Prague, Prague, Czech Republic; <sup>2</sup>Department of Psychiatry, Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry Palacky University Olomouc, Olomouc, Czech Republic

*Introduction:* There is no distinct answer to the various, complex and multilevel ethical questions that therapists may be exposed to during treatment of their clients.

Ethical dilemmas in psychotherapy: The most frequently cited ethical concerns in psychotherapy are related to professionalism, therapeutic boundaries and confidentiality. Ethically oriented therapists serve the well-being of their clients above all other benefits or obligations. Principle-based medical ethics is a valuable tool for resolving ethical dilemmas in psychotherapy in that the therapeutic aspects of ethical dilemmas can be better expressed than in other methods. The main four principles of bioethics, i.e. autonomy, beneficence, non-maleficence and justice, may be adapted for ethics in psychotherapy. However, the context must be reflected because of exceptions in the use of this general concept. On the other side, a client in psychotherapy can be abused economically, sexually and emotionally. This process may be intentional as well as unintentional. Another important dilemma is the dual role in psychotherapy. This dilemma is linked to the tension between psychiatrists' obligations of beneficence towards their clients and conflicting obligations to the society, third parties, other health care colleagues or the continuation of knowledge in the field. The issue of confidentiality often causes ethical dilemmas for the psychotherapist. Since confidentiality is essential for clients to engage in therapy, it is important to protect psychotherapy notes. On the other hand, there is a difference between confidentiality and legal right; how, why and when it can be broken. And the reasons for doing so are not well understood by many therapists.