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CLIENT-CENTERED PSYCHOTHERAPY EFFICACY IN PANIC DISORDER

O.D. Panait, A.L. Chirita

University Clinic of Psychiatry Craiova, Craiova, Romania

Background and aims: Panic disorder has an overall prevalence rate of 2.1% with higher rates in women. Usually, the treatment includes pharmacotherapy (SSRI) and cognitive-behavioral therapy. But two thirds of the patients have a chronic pattern of evolution, with exacerbations and remissions. That is why we looked for another form of psychotherapy to help patients improve their quality of life.

Methods: We evaluated 25 patients (17 female and 8 male), with the mean age of 27.8 years, for 48 weeks. They were treated with paroxetine 20 mg daily for 12 weeks and with weekly sessions of client-centered psychotherapy. They were evaluated with the Covi Anxiety Scale (CAS), The Panic and Agoraphobia Scale (PAS) and the CGIs (CGI-I and CHI-S).

Results: At the beginning of the treatment the next mean values of the whole group were: CAS 12.9, PAS 50.4, CGI-S 5.3. After 12 weeks the mean values were: CAS 6.7, PAS 12.1 and the CGI-I 2. After 24 weeks the mean values were: CAS 4, PAS 4.3 and the CGI-I 1.3. At the end of the study the CGI-I was 1, the CAS 3 and the PAS was zero.

Conclusions: Client-centered psychotherapy is an useful approach in patients with panic disorder.