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COGNITIVE DISORDERS IN HOSPITALIZED ADOLESCENT ANORECTIC AND BULIMIC PATIENTS

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Objective: The problem of cognitive dysfunction in eating disorders remains controversial and the research results are not univocal. Because of that, research was undertaken on a homogenous group of young patients suffering from eating disorders, hospitalized in the adolescent unit.

Method: The cognitive functions were assessed by Wisconsin Card Sorting Test (WCST) and Digit Span Test in the group of 60 adolescent girls (30 anorectic, 30 bulimic) of the same age and compared with the control group of 39 healthy adolescent girls. Also the relation of cognitive disorders with some clinical features of the illness such as the degree of weight loss, BMI at the admission and discharge and the results of EDI test were assessed.

Results: Research results did not show statistically significant differences in the performance in the WCST between anorectic and bulimic patients and the control group. However, the group of anorectic patients show the tendency to perform worse in some parameters of WCST (TA, TE, PE, %PE, %CLR) than the control group, although the results do not reach statistical significance. The results of the bulimic patients were better ($p=0.04$) than the control group in the Digit Span Test. No correlation was found between clinical data and results in WCST in eating disorder groups of patients while the correlation was found between results of Digit Span Test and BMI at admission in both clinical groups.

Conclusions: The research does not fully confirm that patients suffering from eating disorders show deficits in cognitive functions.