

P02-387

THE EFFECT OF ALEXITHYMIA ON ANXIETY, DEPRESSION, COPING, AND DIFFICULTIES IN DAILY LIVING IN ONCOLOGIC PATIENTS

M. Romoli<sup>1</sup>, O. Bernini<sup>1</sup>, F. Cosci<sup>2</sup>, C. Berrocal<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Psychiatry, Neurobiology, Pharmacology, and Biotechnologies, University of Pisa, Pisa, <sup>2</sup>Department of Psychology, University of Florence, Florence, Italy

Introduction: Alexithymia is a personality trait that may influence the resilience in oncologic patients.

Objectives: Data on the effect of alexithymia on anxiety, depression, coping, and difficulties in daily living in oncologic patients are lacking.

Aims: To test how alexithymia may influence the development of anxiety, depression, difficulties in daily living, and coping in oncologic patients if compared to healthy volunteers.

Methods: Healthy subjects with high level of alexithymia, healthy subjects with low level of alexithymia, oncologic patients with high level of alexithymia, and oncologic patients with low level of alexithymia were compared. The Toronto Alexithymia Scale (TAS-20) was used to assess alexithymia, the Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale (HADS) allowed to assess anxiety and depression, the Brief COPE was used to assess the coping, and the dimension of daily living of the Behaviour And Symptom Identification Scale (BASIS-32) was used to assess the difficulties in daily living. The differences among the groups were analysed by means of the analyses of covariance controlling for age, education, marital status, and working activity.

Results: A total of 124 subjects participated to the study (57 oncologic patients and 67 healthy subjects). Results showed a between-subjects effect of alexithymia. Subjects with higher level of alexithymia had higher scores in anxiety and depression, higher difficulties in daily living, and lower problem-focused and dysfunctional coping strategies, regardless of having cancer or not.

Conclusions: Alexithymia seems to influence the development of anxiety/depression, the functional daily living, and some strategies of coping more than having cancer.