

ALEXYTHYMIA AND NARRATIVES IN THE PSYCHOTHERAPY OF EATING DISORDERS. CORRELATIONS BETWEEN PSYCHOMETRIC SCALES AND THE NARRATIVE INDICES OF THE REFERENTIAL PROCESS

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Introduction: This study presents the first results of a project on alexythymia and emotional connections in a sample of 8 patients with EDs. The project aims to evaluate changes in emotional expressions through the language used, by means of the Italian measure of the referential process. Changes in the alexithymic condition will be examined through the outcome and qualitative analysis of the psychotherapeutic process.

Method: 25 verbatim transcribed psychotherapeutic sessions were analyzed and correlated with TAS20, EDI-2, PBI, BUT, SWAP200, and between these and the narrative indices of the IDAAP.

Results: The relation between TAS20 and PBI supports a link between alexythymia and parenting styles: neglect and overprotection seem to contribute to difficulties in forming emotional connections. The positive correlation found between the TAS20 and some EDI2 subscales indicates a tendency to express misunderstood stimuli by means of the body. A positive correlation between MHIWRAD2 and TAS20 may suggest strong phases of emotional activation due to emotional dysregulation. The analysis of the significant correlations between the PBI and the RA measures indicate that parenting styles are related to language. A positive correlation between the IWRAD indices and maternal overprotectiveness was found: maternal overprotectiveness may be associated to strong emotional activation which is in turn characterized by emotional dysregulation. The associations between the narrative indices and the high functioning measure of the SWAP200 suggest that the reflexive components is related to high functioning; emotional dysregulation, as expressed by the variability in RA peaks, seems to be connected to low functioning.