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PSYCHOANALYTIC PSYCHOTHERAPY AND VENLAFAXINE AMONG ACUTELY SUICIDAL BORDERLINE PATIENTS: A RANDOMIZED CLINICAL STUDY

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Background: Psychoanalytic psychotherapy was found superior to usual treatment among borderline patients and should be further investigated in subject samples with adequate adherence to effective treatment and careful evaluation of psychotherapy process and its relationship to outcome. According to this rationale we tested the comparative cost-effectiveness of an innovative model of time limited psychoanalytic psychotherapy aimed at working-out conflicting mourning process associated with traumatic abandonment from a romantic partner.

Methods: Eighty patients aged 18-60, who had been referred to medical emergency room with self-intoxication, DSMIV-R major depression and DSMIV-R borderline personality disorder were investigated in a 3-month randomized clinical trial. At general hospital discharge consecutive subjects were allocated to time-limited mourning focused psychoanalytic psychotherapy and venlafaxine and psychodynamic crisis intervention and venlafaxine. Reliable evaluations were conducted at intake, treatment discharge and 6-month follow-up on a battery of standardized instruments. Service consume was assessed via the computerized case register of the Geneva state health services system.

Results: Intensive psychoanalytic psychotherapy was found a cost-effective treatment choice among borderline patients in a suicidal crisis.

Comment: A combination of ambulatory psychoanalytic psychotherapy and venlafaxine protocol is a feasible, safe and cost-effective treatment for acutely suicidal borderline patients.

Keywords: Borderline personality disorder, psychoanalytic psychotherapy, venlafaxine, combined treatment, costs, randomized clinical trial.