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PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS IN PATIENTS SUFFERING FROM FEMORAL HEAD OSTEONECROSIS, WITH AND WITHOUT WHITE MATTER LESIONS: CLINICAL CHARACTERISTICS AND PERSONALITY TRAITS

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Background: The aim of the present study was to investigate clinical parameters in relation to personality characteristics and psychopathology, in patients with non traumatic osteonecrosis of the femoral head (ONFH), with and without cerebral white matter lesions (WML).

Methods: Sixty seven patients participated in the study, 48 males and 19 females. The mean age was 37.6 years (SD 10.92, range: 15-61). Seventy five healthy individuals age and sex matched, served as controls. Socio-demographic information, clinical data and brain MRI findings were collected. The following self-report instruments were used: General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-28) and Defense Style Questionnaire (DSQ).

Results: The odds of being assessed with a psychiatric diagnosis upon interview were three times greater among patients with ONFH compared to healthy controls ( $p < .006$ ). The presence of cerebral WML and secondary nature of ONFH were associated with intense symptoms of psychological distress and especially with somatic symptoms of depression and social dysfunction ( $p < .003$ ). A specific personality structure was identified in patients with ONFH.

Conclusions: Patients suffering from osteonecrosis of femoral head, especially when white matter lesions are present, often present psychological distress and problematic personality organization. Therefore psychological support and/or psychiatric intervention can be beneficial to these individuals.