

Multicenter project regarding training in and application and scoring of a) (an adapted version of) the Adult Attachment Interview (AAI), b) the Reflective Functioning (RF) Scale, c) the Change After Psychotherapy (Psychoanalysis) (CHAP) interview, d) multicenter application of the Periodical Rating Scale, and e) testing and development of process measures

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Summary

Aims

The study's focus is in the realm of process and outcome research, i.e. systematic evaluation of the psychoanalytic enterprise before, during and after the treatment. Process measures will be the center of attention with the ultimate goal of adding scientific-empirical arguments to our clinical knowledge of the curative factors in psychoanalytic treatment. The value of the whole multicenter project especially lies in the creation of a multicenter-cooperation to establish a systematic structural evaluation-system of our daily psychoanalytic practice, combined with an empirical research-effort that underscores the claim of psychoanalysis to a place among the sciences. A concrete future output of the whole enterprise could be the construction of one (flexible) quality monitoring and checking system for psychoanalytic treatment. The first stage of the project concerns selections of instruments and training in relevant methods. The next stage will be to formulate more specific research questions concerning process and outcome. Some of these will be common to all multicenter groups, and some will be specific to each group.

Methods

First the multicenter introduction to AAI interviewing and RF scoring by Prof Peter Fonagy was organized in October 1996 in London. A second training-conference was arranged in December 1997 in Stockholm. The group also met again in intensive workshops during the IPA research conference March 1998 in London. Regular half-yearly training meetings at the yearly Fellows day of the Research Training Programme and the annual IPA research conference in London and one of the centers of the group by turns was planned.

Patients will be recruited by and from the local centers for pilot-studies regarding AAI Interviews and the CHAP interview (Sandell, 1997). Interview material will be translated and scored and otherwise systematically processed by the group.

The Periodical Rating Scale will be filled out by the analysts several times during the treatment period and the data will be read into the computer of the Netherlands Psychoanalytic Institute for central data processing.

The Bucci/Mergenthaler method for measuring Referential Activity during the psychoanalytic process will be made available for the Multicenter Project

Results

Development and testing of application of the AAI-based Therapist Relationship Interview (TRI) has proceeded since October 1997. The format of the interview was discussed in multicenter meetings and has been adapted on the basis of comments by Fonagy and Target and clinical experiences by members of our group. In a workshop possibilities for scoring the TRI material on Reflective Functioning were also tested. A systematic pilot-study on a small sample of analysands was done in order to test the practical-clinical applicability of the TRI and to get an impression of possibilities and consequences of implementation of the procedure in a regular 'battery'. In Amsterdam 20 TRI were conducted and scored on RF.

The first version of the Periodical Rating Scale was used in a pilot study starting in October 1996 at the Netherlands Psychoanalytic Institute (NPI). A computer programme was constructed for processing the PRS-data into a yearly process-overview. The PRS has been revised significantly based on these results. This has resulted in a much shorter questionnaire that is used once every two weeks for a session randomly chosen by the computer. The PRS was used in Milan by Gherardo Amadei to follow the psychoanalytic process during psychoanalytic psychotherapy and in Stockholm by Imre Szecsödy during psychoanalysis. An Italian adapted version was developed by Gherardo Amadei and research has been conducted with the PRS and other instruments. The PRS was also included in two N=1 studies conducted by Imre Szecsödy.

After statistical analysis, the number of items in the questionnaire was significantly reduced from 262 to 82 items (Beenen & Stoker, 2001). This shorter version has been used for four years. Since July 2003 the content items have been deleted and 44 items on the nature and quality of the contact development have remained (NPI, 2003).

New computer programmes are being developed that can process the information and provide reports at other centres, because the earlier developed programme proved less useful in this respect. A special CD-ROM version is now in development at the Research Department of the NPI which will contain the administration of the questionnaire and the manual (from 2005 this CD will be available on request from the Research Department of the **Netherlands Psychoanalytic Institute**). A manual on the development and interpretation of the PPRS results is nearly completed and will be finished in 2005 (Stoker & Zevalkink, in preparation). The shorter version (PPRS) has already been used by Rudi Vermote in a research project and these first results are promising with regard to the construct validity of the PPRS.

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Implications for psychoanalysis

A main motive of sharing the development of scales for measuring process and effect with several European psychoanalytic researchers and practitioners (AHMOS group) is to promote the distribution of empirical findings in psychoanalytic treatments by bi-lateral and poly-lateral discussions within this group.

Taking the PPRS (Psychoanalytic Process Rating Scale) as an example for describing eventual implications for psychoanalytic treatments, we can distinguish several aspects.

1. Contrary to the more idiosyncratic and retrospectively written narrative reports, the PPRScale, filled out immediately after the session, is a questionnaire of 44 items that provides standardised information about the analyst's point of view of the contact between the analyst and analysand.
2. The output of the PPRS questionnaires, filled out regular and (as mentioned above) immediately after the sessions, may add less biased information about the treatment because it is less influenced by knowledge about the treatment as is the case in retrospectively written narrative reports.
3. Matching the analyst's opinion about the treatment and mirroring this with the PPRS-output based on his/her own fillings out during the treatment, may stimulate other and new thoughts and perspectives about the progress of the treatment.
4. The graphically presentation of each item and of the five PPRS factors referring to the degree of presence of Tension, Cooperation, Contentment, Disillusion, Making explicit, in the filled out sessions, opens the possibility to compare treatments of the same therapist as well as those from other therapists.
5. The standardized filling out, by e.g. applying the PPRS, may contribute to make explicit of what the therapist thinks he/she is doing during the sessions and may be helpful to explore more or less implicit personal and public theories that are used during treatment.
6. By applying a process-instrument by the therapist and by assessing the output by colleagues the close connection between process and effect comes to the fore. By process is meant within the limits of the PPRScale: the action and the interaction of the therapist and patient during the sessions over the whole of the treatment. By applying process-instruments we intend to open a window to the very complex relationship of process and effect, e.g. what sort of process is accountable for what kind of effect?

In short, the multicenter collaboration resulted in exchanging research methods, learning from each other's expertise, and the development of new process measures for studying psychoanalysis. Without this project, we -as psychoanalysts-would not have been able to pursue these activities as intensively as we did from December 1998 till now.

Keywords

Adult Attachment Interview, attachment interviews, CHAP interview, multicenter approach, process measures, reflective functioning, RF, PPRS, Psychoanalytic Process Rating Scale, Referential Activity, Therapist Relationship Interview

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