RELATIONS BETWEEN FAMILY CONTEXT, EXPERIENCED TRAUMAS AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE IN ADULT PSYCHIATRIC PATIENTS

Adamczyk-Banach M.

Institute of Applied Psychology, The Faculty of Management and Social Communication, Jagiellonian University in Cracow, Poland

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Background and aims: Family context and childhood trauma are regarded as important factors leading to substance abuse (i.a. Khoury, Tang, Bradley, Cubells, & Ressler, 2010; Mandavia, Robinson, Bradley, Ressler, & Powers, 2016; McLaughlin, Campbell, & McCollgan, 2016). Nonetheless, most of the studies apply to the population of adolescents in risk and only few of them concern adults abusing alcohol and drugs. The aim of the present study is to establish whether family factors and experienced traumas play significant role in the substance abuse of adult patients of the psychiatric department.

Methods: Quantitative research was conducted in the group of 82 patients. The scale ‘Me and My Parents’ from the Attachment Patterns Questionnaire (Adamczyk-Banach) was used to determine family context and relations with the main attachment figures. The scale is composed with three sub-scales ‘Me and My Mother’, ‘Me and My Father’ and ‘Me and my Parents’, all with good reliability (Cronbach’s alpha from 0.74 to 0.93) and validity (correlations with ‘Parental Bonding Inventory’ Parker, Popiel, Pragłowska, 2006). Childhood and adolescent traumatic events were estimated with Crises and Traumas Inventory (Adamczyk-Banach).

Results: A multiple regression analysis was conducted to examine the predictors of substance abuse. Only one predictor showed statistical significance – the overall level of experienced traumas (β = .24), which accounted for 14% of variance in substance abuse. Furthermore, correlation analysis revealed positive, weak interdependence between substance abuse and poor parental relationship (r = .23, p < .035), as well as family dysfunction (r = .26, p < .016).

Conclusions: According to the results of the present study, experienced traumas might play an important role in developing substance abuse. Family context is also not without significance, especially the factors connected with parents, e.g.: low relationship satisfaction, conflicts, violence and substance abuse. Such a family background might result in child’s over-responsibility and lack of parental support. The obtained results suggest further research in this direction.