

Therapeutic Alliance in the initial phase of psychotherapy with adolescents: different perspectives and their association with therapeutic outcomes

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Resumen

Psychotherapy research focusing on adults as well as on children and adolescents has revealed a positive association between the quality of the therapeutic alliance (TA) in the first sessions and therapeutic outcomes. Nevertheless, there is controversy regarding which perspective (of the adolescents, therapists, or parents) and what moment of evaluation (first, second, or third session) is most strongly associated with outcome. This study aims to describe the TA during the initial phase of psychotherapy with adolescents, from several perspectives, and relate it to the intermediate and final outcomes of the therapy. The study is descriptive-correlational and was conducted in naturalistic settings. The sample comprised 20 individual psychotherapeutic processes (15 females, 5 males; average age: 15.8 years; standard deviation=1.04). The variables studied were: TA, measured with the Working Alliance Inventory, applied to adolescents, therapists, and parents, and therapeutic outcomes, measured using Lambert's Outcome Questionnaire (OQ-45.2). The results show that the TA improved from session one to session three, both in the adolescents and the therapists. The TA, as perceived by the adolescents in the third session, is positively correlated with final outcomes ($r=-.732^*$, $P=.025$). The TA evaluated from the therapists' perspective in the third session, specifically the bond component of the TA, predicts the final success of psychotherapy with adolescent patients [$\beta=0.426$, Exp. (B)=1.531, degree of freedom=1, $P=0.034$]. The importance of the initial construction of the working alliance by both participants is discussed.

Palabras clave

Palabras clave de autor: Psychotherapy with adolescents; Therapeutic alliance in the initial phase; Therapeutic outcomes

KeyWords Plus: CLIENT INVOLVEMENT; WORKING ALLIANCE; PARENT ALLIANCE; CHILD; VARIABLES; MODEL