

BRIEF STRATEGIC THERAPY OF PANIC DISORDERS IN STUDENTS OF MOSCOW UNIVERSITIES

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Introduction: In a wide range of issues related to health care and improving the academic performance of students, a significant place is occupied by neuropsychiatric disorders, which might have a direct impact on education, social and personal life. This issue, in addition, has also an economic side: academic leaves, and, in particular, dropouts caused by the neuropsychiatric disorders - these can as well cause sometimes unnecessary expenditures of a university. The leading place among the neuropsychiatric diseases in students is occupied by the borderline mental disorders, in particular panic disorder.

Relevance of this article is determined by the prevalence of panic disorders in the campus environment, the emerging trend towards the increase of disorders, the ability to quickly lead to social maladjustment (the threat of expulsion from the University, applying for academic leave), and the desire to get rid of this pathology in the shortest possible time, without the use of psychotropic drugs, taking into account the specifics of the situation, which is University attendance.

The aim of this study was to study the effectiveness of Brief Strategic Therapy approach in the treatment and social adaptation of students suffering from panic disorder.

Subjects and methods: The clinical material was sampled using International Statistical Classification of Diseases 10th Revision. This research is based on a clinical and psychopathological study of the dynamics of panic disorder in the use of brief strategic therapy in a group of 27 students (21 male and 6 female), aged 19 to 25 years with 3 year average duration of the disorder.

Results: The strategic approach in psychotherapy is a model of quick solution of individual and family problems, partnership problems in a wide context of interpersonal relations, depressive, anxiety-phobic, obsessive-compulsive, eating disorders and panic disorders. By the time of seeking help of a psychiatrist, patients have been self-medicating with the use of sedatives of herbal origin, using a variety of psychological and physical training. Psychotropic drugs were not taken. All patients were socially maladapted (due to skipping classes and academic underachievement some of them were to be excluded from the university or were preparing to apply for academic leave). The duration of the study was equal to the period of treatment and was 2 years. The number of therapeutic sessions ranged from 4 to 16 with a frequency of 1 every 2 weeks. To achieve a therapeutic effect in the treatment, a certain sequence of tactics and strategies was used, allowing the breakage of the pathological cognitive and operational systems of the patient. The therapeutic process consisted of a number of stages. The most important role in each of them belonged to the strategic interview with the patient. Stage 1: the first meeting and building of a therapeutic relationship: defining the problem; coordination of therapeutic intervention goals; conclusion of a therapeutic contract. Stage 2: defining the perceptive-reactive system that is supporting the disorder. Stage 3: building the therapeutic intervention program and strategic changes. Stage 3: completion of the treatment. For each patient we developed different, individual versions of strategic protocols and models of intervention. As a rule, the episodes of panic became less intense by the beginning of the second stage. During the third stage, episodes of panic attacks were minimized, the emotional state improved, students continued their studies, passed exams. Despite the reduction of panic attack frequency in 6 patients (5 male and 1 female) remained prone to intrusive analysis of reality, reflection and low activity. These patients were prescribed outpatient drug therapy. One student had to be hospitalized in the Clinic of Neuroses. The remaining patients (74%) had completely stopped painful symptoms by the fourth stage, social adaptation was restored.

Conclusions: The use of brief strategic therapy in the treatment of panic disorder in students of Moscow universities has shown its high efficiency: in 74% of cases it was possible to achieve complete treatment of the clinic of panic disorder, restoration of social adaptation (study), avoid hospitalization and prescription of psychotropic drugs. Brief Strategic Therapy is preferable, because it does not reduce the cognitive functions of students, does not require even a temporary termination in studies. It should also be noted the efficiency of treatment by strategic therapy, which distinguishes it from other treatments.