

SIDE EFFECTS OF PSYCHOTHERAPY

R. Gregurek

*Clinic for Psychological Medicine, University Hospital Center Zagreb, Croatia
bkalenic@kbc-zagreb.hr*

Most medical interventions and therapeutic procedures contain potential risk of harmful effect on patient's medical condition. The decision about indication of psychotherapeutic treatment is connected with comparison of expected benefit and potential damage that may be caused by such treatment, bearing in mind the basic principle – *primum non nocere*.

Psychiatrist – psychotherapist often consciously takes risk of potential transient side effects of therapeutic procedure because, on the other hand, anticipates and evaluates possibility of significant improvement of patient's health. Psychotherapeutic process is characterized with relation between patient and psychotherapist, which is marked with maximum confidence, revelation of most intimate feelings. A specific transfer relation develops during psychotherapy, characterized with very dependent position of the patient. Psychotherapist becomes, in a way, basic therapeutic remedy during psychotherapeutic process, and therefore, in accordance with particularity of medical procedure, side effect may come out of personality of psychotherapist.

There are reasons why in medical practice today it is believed that not every medical doctor is capable of exercising psychotherapy if he/she does not fulfill certain requests. It is especially important for psychotherapist to be aware of his/her “blind spots“, limitations connected with personality, and especially educational level and limitations. The question of formal qualifications for psychotherapeutic work comes out of the above mentioned, as well as the question of appropriate education for this kind of treatment.