

First Psychotic Episode between Dimensions and Personological Categories

Abstract

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Introduction

Schizophrenic processual psychoses, affective or with mixed pictures continue to remain even nowadays in the limelight of the clinical psychiatry according to their onset and evolutionary particularities and therapeutic responsiveness. Morbid patterns appear and diversify having less specific symptomatology, being difficult to diagnose, with prolonged and complicated evolutions. In this context is outlined the particular importance of acknowledging the components of the psychotic prodrome and the factors which may favour the onset of the first psychotic episode. Among these a particular position is occupied by the structure of the premorbid personality. Taking into account the progressive alteration of the personality's structure in the evolutionary process of psychoses, any evaluation of the personality in relation to psychoses may be realized during the initial disease.

Objectives

The objective of the research is to highlight certain relations between the dominants of the premorbid personality – approached categorically and dimensionally – and the traits of the first psychotic episode, in order to increase the accuracy of the diagnosis and of the early initiation of a more specific therapeutic strategy.

Material and method:

It is a prospective study in which there have been included patients with a first psychotic episode admitted to the Psychiatric Clinic II of Târgu-Mureş in the period 01 January 2007 - 31 December 2011.

The study has been developed in two phases. In the first phase, corresponding to the first psychotic episode, we have delimited the positive, negative, affective, mixed and disorganized dominant symptomatological profile by using PANSS scale and we grouped the patients with schizophrenic first psychotic episode separately from those with an affective component first psychotic episode.

The second phase includes the evaluation of the patients' personality in phase of clinical remission of the first psychotic episode from a double perspective, categorical – by

SCID II – and dimensional – on the basis of the Five-Factor model and also of the Seven-Factor model. Thus we had access to a more complex and nuanced image of the premorbid personality and we have analyzed the relations between the latter and the psychotic process.

Results

In most of the patients included in the study, the first psychotic episode has been dominated by the positive or mixed symptomatology without any obvious connection to the premorbid personality traits categorically diagnosed. The number of patients with first psychotic episode dominated by negative symptoms has been lower, but it was obvious the association with the presence of the premorbid personality traits of schizoid and avoidant type. The note of severity given by the disorganized symptoms in the first psychotic episode cannot be correlated with the presence or absence of the affective symptomatology.

We have determined a positive association between the Cluster A personality disorders and the first psychotic episode with schizophrenic symptomatology, between Cluster B personality disorders and the first psychotic episode with affective component. In the case of Cluster C there have not been specific differences from this perspective. We have encountered difficulties in the dimensional evaluation of the patients with first psychotic episode with negative symptoms which plead for the severity of the respective psychotic phenomenology.

The dimensional evaluation of the patients with schizophrenic first psychotic episode and of those with an affective component first psychotic episode has allowed pertinent comparisons and emphasis of certain dimensional results which plead for the particular role of the psychotic affective component. The presence of the disorganized symptomatology is associated with the characterial dimensional profile dominated by self-directedness and low cooperativeness alongside high self-transcendence, a profile that may be a predictive element for the dissociative psychotic clinical picture. The established correspondences but not enough commented yet in the specialty literature, between the categorical personological diagnosis and the dimensional one, have been also confirmed on the batch of patients included in this study.

Conclusions

The results of the study confirm the fact that comprehension of relations between the premorbid personality and prodromal psychotic phenomenology allows to emphasize certain groups of populations with high vulnerability for psychotic disorders. The facets of the personality's structure may be also involved in the dynamic of a prolonged evolution of psychoses independently of their phenomenological dominant.

Key words: first psychotic episode, personality, categorical and dimensional evaluation.