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Evaluating the best interests of the child - a model of multidisciplinary teamwork

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This presentation describes the rationale, goals and procedure of a working model of multidisciplinary teamwork in conducting clinical evaluations of children and families and preparing expert testimony. Over the past five years, the team has evaluated over 60 cases involving child abuse and neglect, and questions of parental ability. Teamwork can reduce the distorting effects of personal biases, beliefs and countertransference issues. The contribution of integrating different theoretical viewpoints (theories of development, object relations, family systems, etc) is discussed. Recommendations include: (a) separation of roles of expert witness and therapist; (b) utilization of different diagnostic tools (psychodiagnostic tests, observations of interaction, joint clinical interviews, etc); (c) value of examining the feasibility of the recommendations with parents, care givers and community workers; and (d) strategies of dispute resolution and attainment of parental consent, utilizing the effects of potential judicial power and focusing on the best interests of the child.

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Cognitive deficits after traumatic brain injury - does lesion site affect effort?

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Background and aims: Traumatic brain injury (TBI) may lead to enduring cognitive and emotional deficits. Assessment of such deficits by psychological testing requires testing for effort and cooperativeness, especially when litigation is involved. How strong is the effect of effort and does lesion site, especially frontal lobe damage, influence effort?

Methods: N= 208 subjects with TBI were assessed between 2004 and 2006 by a neurological, a psychiatric and a psychological examination. The referral sources were the German workers compensation board and private insurance companies. The psychological battery comprised measures of memory, attention, cognitive speed and intelligence as well as self report instruments for assessment of psychiatric symptoms. Effort was assessed with the WMT (Green 2003). Lesion site and type was available through reports on brain CAT scans and MRIs. Assessment was done a median 25 months after the injury.

Results: The results indicate that effort explained the largest share (50%) of the variance in psychological tests scores. There was no effect for lesion site on effort. A factor analysis on test scores produced a two factor solution, with the largest loadings on effort.

Conclusions: It is evident that in cases involved in litigation the performance in neuropsychological assessment is mainly explained by effort. However, there was no evidence, that injury to some brain areas would specifically impair effort. The study adds support to the construct validity of effort testing and its robustness in frontal lobe damage.

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Aspects of forensic psychiatric estimation of the influence of totalitarian sects activity on the adherents mental health

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Background: Every year the number of adherents of totalitarian sects in Ukraine grows. They are referred for forensic psychiatric examination more and more frequently, both in civil and criminal cases.

Aims: The purpose of our research was to determine the degree of harm done by the activity of totalitarian sects existing in Ukraine to the mental health of their adherents. To create standardised methodological approaches to the procedures of forensic psychiatric examination.

Methods: We examined adherents of different totalitarian sects directed to the Odessa psychiatric hospital N 1 for forensic psychiatric examination. Special cards were used, in which we registered the description of his/her mental state, and the data of psychological investigation.

Results: As a result of psychological techniques used in the totalitarian sects the adherents can easily develop new psychological characteristics, which are described in ICD-10, part F60.7 as the Dependent personality disorder. In particular, this disorder includes risk factors of the development of induced psychoses. The worsening of initial mental disorders (especially schizophrenia) was observed in many cases as a result of stressful influence (of psychogenic and somatogenic nature), to which the adherents were exposed.

Conclusion: To assess the extent of harm done to the adherents' mental health by the activity of totalitarian sects it is necessary to provide inpatient complex forensic psychiatric examination with the investigation of additional materials (audio- and video-records of the religious ceremonies).

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Visual arts therapy at turopolje correction institution

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This paper is a record of monitoring and evaluation of visual arts expression in six inmates subject to re-education measure at Turopolje Correctional Institution, minors showing disturbed behavioural patterns, with felonies record, difficulties in verbal expression, with various educational background, intellectual capacities, financial standing, from various categories of primary families and social and cultural milieus.

The goal was to establish how far expression through visual arts influenced the introspection process and resolving of conflicts without expert help, improved communication with the environment, adaptation to penal circumstances, development of positive behavioural patterns, psychological and social maturation processes. The inmates' expression through visual arts was also monitored as a non-verbal communication helping the involved expert in observation, diagnostics and therapy in cases of no or insufficient verbal communication.

The research was done by methods of systematic monitoring and data gathering.

The research showed that through visual arts the inmates articulated emotional and other problems more easily, adapted better to penal conditions, gained insight into their personal advancements. It also helped them develop skills and habits that in the future could help in the socialization and reintegration process as ultimate goals

of re-education measure. It also provided a tool for monitoring their attitude towards the re-education measure and its implementation and the transfer of inmates with the expert team.

The authors hope this study will contribute in promoting visual arts therapy to the status it deserves and its introduction as a full-scale discipline in the implementation of individual prison sentence execution programme.

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Forensic evaluation of psychiatric disorders in epilepsy

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Objective of the study: Elaboration of the methodology of forensic psychiatric assessment and development of the system of expert evaluations of psychiatric disorders in epilepsy.

Material: 200 male offenders suffering from epilepsy.

Methods: Clinical, EEG and statistical analysis.

Results: The 4-stage of psychiatric disorders in epilepsy evaluation has been proposed: 1. Diagnosis. The choice of expert approach is determined by individual clinical picture and course of the disorders; character of prevailing psychiatric disorders - personality disorders, psychoses, dementia, paroxysmal states; 2. Finding out the cause and effect relationships. Revealing the psychopathological mechanisms of an offence and qualification of a principal syndrome at the moment of offence. 3. Situational analysis. Evaluation of an adequacy of perception of the situation by a patient, his chances to choose other ways of behavior; capability to foresee a result of his behavior; 3 Building an expert conclusion: comparing of the current clinical picture and psychopathological disorder at the moment of crime with medical and juridical criteria of the formulas of irresponsibility, diminished responsibility and criteria for involuntary hospitalization.

Conclusion: The proposed algorithm distinguishing different types of the relationships between psychopathological condition and criminal situation gives a possibility of precise evaluation of persons suffering from epilepsy. It takes into consideration the clinical diversity of psycho-pathological conditions that can differently contribute to the persons' responsibility.

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Diminished responsibility: some current issues in Russia

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The aim of the study: to evaluate the 10-years practice of forensic psychiatric assessment according to diminished responsibility in Russia.

Material: Accused offenders considered to be partially responsible for their actions under forensic psychiatric assessment in Serbsky Centre in 1996-2005.

Methods: Psychopathological, follow up.

Results: Diminished responsibility was introduced into the Russian legislation ten years ago only. The current experience demonstrates its active assimilation. Besides that, there is a distinctive specificity of its use determined by peculiarities of the object of assessment, i.e. by non-psychotic level of disorder and therefore not clearly apparent in evaluation. It became clear that in many cases all involved persons including the offender are not interested in this legal norm equally. It is a good possibility for officials (experts,

judges, barristers) to take into consideration during investigation every important issue of legal case (psychological abnormality first of all). The advantage of being partially responsible for offenders is not so evident. Moreover according the follow up results this fact can be the discrediting information for a prisoner. The label of mental illness is well known obstacle and especially in custody where human values are rather specific and distorted.

Conclusion: In situation when a forensic psychiatrist realizes probability of labeling the person due making his own decision of partially responsible one more specific problem can arise for him - is it proved from ethical point of view to make such of decision or not? It can influence negatively the expert's professional activity in some cases.

Poster Session 2: BIOLOGICAL MARKERS AND BRAIN IMAGING

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Renaissance of quantitative electroencephalography (QEEG) in psychiatry

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Hundreds of QEEG-related papers brought new information about the temporal dynamics of complex neuronal interactions that underlie impaired processing in many psychiatric diagnoses. Besides this fact, many researchers, clinical psychiatrists and neuroscientists prefer new imaging techniques (Positron Emission Tomography, PET; and functional Magnetic Resonance, fMRI) even if they are based on an indirect index of brain computing as metabolic or hemodynamic measurements which are blind to millisecond phenomena. We present the results of our studies provided with QEEG techniques (Low Resolution Electromagnetic Tomography, LORETA; EEG coherence, EEG cordance) in: 1) more than 60 patients with schizophrenia examined by means of QEEG and PET. We found significantly lower EEG coherence values, mainly from the left frontotemporal derivations in patients group and there was also significant correlation between the decrease of frontotemporal EEG coherence and elevated glucose metabolic uptake in the limbic structures (posterior cingulate and hippocampus). LORETA analysis showed almost the same results as analysis of PET images, not only in basal disease process, but also after successful application of rTMS in the subgroup of patients with treatment-resistant auditory hallucination. 2) in more than 30 patients with resistant depressive disorder we computed the new EEG indicator value (EEG cordance), and we showed, that the decrease in prefrontal EEG cordance in theta frequency band may indicate early changes of prefrontal activity and can become a useful tool in the prediction of response to antidepressants.

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Endophenotypic measures of altered inhibitory brain processes in ADHD

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