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DIALECTICAL BEHAVIOR THERAPY FOR INPATIENTS WITH BORDERLINE PERSONALITY DISORDER AND CONCOMITANT ALCOHOL DEPENDENCE: RESULTS OF A PILOT STUDY

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Purpose of study: Psychotherapy with patients suffering from borderline personality disorder (BPD) and concomitant alcoholism requires an integrative approach. Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT) is an evaluated and effective program for patients with BPD, whereas behavior therapy, commitment therapy and self-help groups have all been found to be effective in the treatment of alcoholism. In this pilot study, we give an initial report of the concept and efficacy of an eight week inpatient therapy program integrating an evaluated therapy of alcoholism with standard DBT. The changes of symptoms were evaluated using the Borderline Symptom List (BSL), the European Addiction Severity Index (EuropASI), Lifetime Parasuicide Count (LPC), and Beck-Depression-Inventory.

Findings: Five case reports were included. All show improvements in various subscores of BSL and EuropASI, and had a decrease in the LPC score.

Summary: With this pilot study we test the efficacy of an extended DBT program for inpatients with BPD and alcoholism who failed outpatient treatment, and found significant improvements in the study in all outcome measures. This promising result points to the necessity for clinical trials that compare standard care with extended DBT in larger cohorts.