

P02-165

IMPACT OF DISEASE CONCEPTS ON ATTITUDES TOWARDS ALCOHOL DEPENDENT PATIENTS

A. Heberlein, R. Schuster, H. Frieling, A. Glahn, S. Bleich, T. Hillemacher
Psychiatry, Socialpsychiatry and Psychotherapy, Medical School Hanover, Hannover,
Germany

Introduction: Stigmatizing attitudes regarding mentally ill people are common (Rusch et al., 2010). Study result suggest that the degree of stigmatization may depend on concepts of psychiatric diseases (Crisafulli et al., 2008).

Aims: We aimed to investigate the impact of a sole neurobiological vs. a sole sociodynamic disease concept on the attitudes of students towards the alcohol dependent patients (Crisafulli et al., 2008).

Methods: 200 students were randomly assigned to read information explaining alcohol dependence sole neurobiologically/sociodynamically. Subsequently, the students completed a series of questionnaires (adapted from Crisafulli et al. (2008)) regarding their attitudes towards the alcohol dependent patients. Attitudes were compared to attitudes of students not exposed to any disease concept.

Results: Consistent with former study results we found increased blaming and decreased willingness to finance therapy in those students exposed to the sociodynamic explanation. Attitudes regarding blaming and harmfulness of the alcohol dependent patients were increased in the neurobiological and sociodynamic group compared to the un-exposed control group.

Conclusions: Information regarding possible causalities regarding the development of alcohol dependence is associated with more negative attitudes towards alcohol dependent patients in the questioned students compared to unexposed controls. This may be reasoned by the recognition of alcohol dependence as a manifestation of mental illness and the subsequent inclusion of the alcohol dependent patients in the prejudices and acts of discrimination commonly leveled against the mentally ill. Therefore, multimodal interventions rather than medicinal information seem to be necessary in order to decrease stigmatization of the alcohol dependent patients.