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INTRODUCTION

Emotional dysregulation represents a typical trait of many psychiatric disorders. One aspect of emotional regulation deficiencies are acceptance and suppression of negative and/or positive emotions. Changes of acceptance and suppression during the course of illness have not been investigated yet.

OBJECTIVES

Investigation of the course of emotional regulation strategies.

AIMS

The purpose of this study was to investigate,

1. whether acceptance and suppression are related to positive and negative emotions;
2. if there is any change of acceptance and suppression over time;
3. whether depressive patients and healthy controls differ regarding acceptance and suppression levels.

METHODS

Subjects were 40 patients with depression and 29 healthy controls. The study was conducted in the Clinic of Psychiatry and Psychotherapy Bethel, Bielefeld, Germany. The patients were diagnosed according to DSM–IV criteria. BDI was used to assess the level of depressive symptoms. For the assessment of acceptance and suppression of negative and positive emotions the questionnaire FrAGE (Questionnaire of the acceptance of emotions) was used at the begin (T1) and at the end (T2) of inpatient treatment.

RESULTS

Depressive patients reported reduced acceptance of positive and negative emotions. Although the level of acceptance was higher at T2, they still accepted their emotions less than the healthy controls. Patients also suppressed emotions more intensively than controls.

CONCLUSIONS

There are significant differences between depressive and healthy subject in terms of the acceptance and suppression of negative and positive emotions. Nevertheless, the suppression and acceptance of emotions are changing during treatment towards a more adaptive level.