



THE IMPORTANCE OF PSYCHOANALYSIS TO DEAL WITH GENETIC MUTATIONS

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WORKING HYPOTHESIS

Genetic disorders often affect not only individuals but also the entire family. In a preliminary study, we have called RC virus (Resignation and Compassion) an important damaging mechanism to the patients with degenerative conditions. Under its influence, after getting lost and angry for receiving an unexpected diagnosis of a degenerative condition, the patient alienates himself into prêt-à-porter suffering and his family into compassion. What are the consequences of the RC virus?

- To the affected patient: It accelerates the progression of the symptoms leading them up to exclude themselves from social life prematurely.
- To his family and friends: They tend to use the patient's disease as an excuse to avoid taking care of their own problems.
- To their relationships: Their bonds tend to weaken. Compassion is the main feeling offered to the patients, who reject it.

Although all religions preach compassion towards handicapped individuals, all the interviewed patients declared they did not want people to have those feelings towards them. So, since 2009, we have decided to treat the patient's relatives and friends as well in the Psychoanalytic Clinic of the Human Genome Research Center. We also offer them psychoanalytic treatment aiming to diminish compassion in order to increase subjective responsibility. The new psychoanalytic method we have been developing has the Responsibility Principle, as described by the German philosopher Hans Jonas, as its main parameter.

OBJECTIVE

To verify how much we can reduce the negative impact of the standardized behavior to face progressive neurodegenerative disorders (prêt-à-porter suffering) not only on affected patients but also on their family and friends and the relationship among them.

PRELIMINARY RESULTS

The results demonstrated that patients began to show a responsible and inventive way of dealing with the disease. None of the 50 subjects interrupted the psychoanalytic treatment. Moreover, the family resumed their lives by creating a new way to bond with the affected relative. All participants were able to create a singular, not standardized answer to his (or his relative's) genetic condition.

METHODS

Up to this moment, our population is composed by 68 subjects, with the following composition.

Interviewed only (with no need or indication to be submitted to the psycho treatment): 18

Affected members: 34

Non affected members 16

- 8 spinocerebelar ataxia
- 8 myotonic dystrophy
- 7 limb-girdle MD
- 5 facioscapulohumeral
- 2 spinal muscular atrophy
- 2 Duchenne
- 1 Becker
- 1 Freidreich ataxia

- 10 mothers
- 3 fathers
- 1 boyfriend
- 1 brother
- 1 spouse

Total population: 68 subjects

The patients were seen in a weekly basis by a trained team of seven supervised psychoanalysts. The treatment approach is based on obtaining the maximum distance between the subject and the prêt-à-porter expected feelings that are, at least hypothetically, caused by his degenerative condition. In order to increase the treatment effectiveness, the psychoanalysts do not fulfill the patients' expectation to receive the same amount of compassion that they were used to receive from their relatives. We face the effects of RC virus with a new psychoanalytic method aiming to dis-authorize his (or her) suffering. This approach helps:

- the patient to face his diagnosis as a surprise that challenges him (or her) to create a singular response.
- his family and friends to stop using the patient's disease as a justification not to deal with their own problems.

Every 3 months, the subjects are reviewed by the psychoanalyst Jorge Forbes and the geneticist Mayana Zatz. The treatment impact is then reassessed.

CONCLUSIONS

The advances in human genome sequencing will result in an enormous amount of information and a trained team of genetic counselors to help individuals to interpret them. We anticipate that the new psychoanalytic method we have been applying will play a growing role not only helping individuals and their families to reduce the negative impact of the standardized behavior but also with the knowledge of their own genome.