

THE EFFECTS OF PSYCHOANALYSIS IN NEUROMUSCULAR DISORDERS

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WORKING HYPOTHESIS

Genetic disorders often affect not only individuals but the entire family. We have hypothesized that a social virus that we have denominated **RC** (resignation from patients and compassion from relatives) has a negative impact on these families. In progressive neurodegenerative disorders it may also accelerate the progression of the symptoms leading affected patients to exclude themselves from social life prematurely.

From September 2006 to August 2011, 42 patients belonging to families with affected members were included in psychoanalytic treatment. Since 2009, 22 patients' relatives and/or close friends were also treated in the *Psychoanalytic Clinic of the Human Genome Research Center*. Although all religions preach compassion towards handicapped individuals, all the interviewed patients declared they did not want people to have those feelings towards them. Aiming to diminish compassion in order to increase subjective responsibility we have applied a new psychoanalytic method which 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.

SUBJECTS	
Affected members: 42	Non affected members 22
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- 2 Duchenne muscular dystrophy- 1 Becker muscular dystrophy- 8 Limb-girdle muscular dystrophy- 6 Facioscapularhumeral dystrophy- 10 Myotonic dystrophy- 9 Spinocerebelar ataxia- 1 Friedreich ataxia- 3 Motor neuron disease- 2 Charcot Marie Tooth neuropathy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- 15 mothers- 3 fathers- 2 boyfriend/girlfriend- 1 sibling- 1 spouse
Total population: 64 subjects	

METHODS

The patients were seen in a weekly basis by a trained team of supervised psychoanalysts. The treatment approach is based on obtaining the maximum distance between the subject

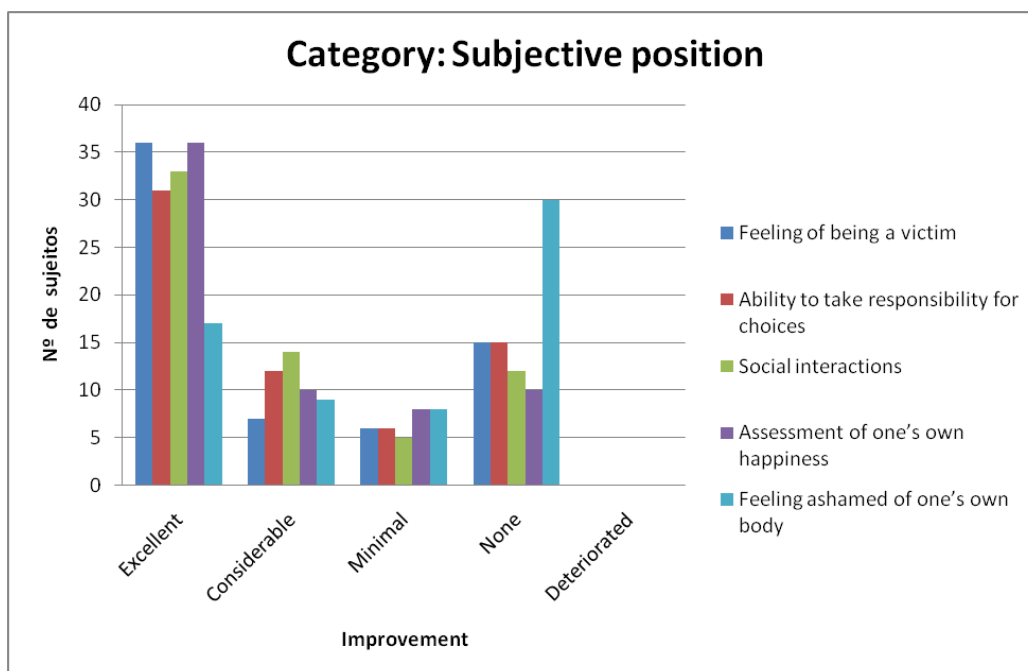
and the prêt-à-porter expected feelings that are, at least hypothetically, caused by his (her) degenerative condition. In order to increase the treatment effectiveness, the psychoanalysts do not fulfill the patients' expectation to receive compassion as they were used to receive from their relatives. We face the effects of RC virus with a new psychoanalytic method. Aiming to *dis-authorize* his (or her) suffering associated to the RC social virus our psychoanalytic 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 JF and MZ and the treatment impact is reassessed.

MAIN RESULTS

Mental/cognitive state: almost 50% of the population improved their ability to express themselves. Behavior: less than 30% of the population failed to show improvements in terms of depression. Love life: a remarkable improvement in all areas. Subjective position: almost 80% of the population became responsible for their own lives.



CONCLUSIONS

The results showed that most patients declared that psychoanalysis was beneficial and helped them in dealing in a responsible and inventive way with their disease. Moreover, non-affected relatives resumed their lives by creating a new relationship with the affected relative. 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 to deal with unexpected results that will come out from genome sequencing.