

Psychotherapy development in Serbia in the 20th century: A qualitative narrative approach

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To understand the phenomenon of a fast-changing world it is invaluable to give consideration to changing worlds of the past. The key focus of this poster is the changing world of psychotherapy development in the 20th century in Serbia. From 1945 to 1970, the development of psychotherapy in Serbian society faced a number of challenges from the ideological constraints of the communist government. The research aim of this study is to explore how psychotherapy developed under communism times with focus on the interplay of psychotherapy institutions, the impact of the state, the effort of key people, educational practices, and exchanges with the international psychotherapy community. Some published sources serve as a basic starting point but, because few accounts were recorded during that period, the research has been based on narrative interviews with a sample of six senior practitioners of psychotherapy who were active during that time. The data analysis was narrative analysis with an oral history approach. The results include a list of the most important academic and clinical institutions and key educators in psychotherapy at the time. The crucial challenges cover constraints in applying knowledge from foreign (capitalist) countries, the abrupt closure of one institution and the effect on psychotherapy practitioners, including the issues of emigration and restrictions on publishing. It was concluded that the ruling communist ideology, and the social organisation imposed by it, hampered and slowed the development of psychotherapy, but did not stop it.