

Patterns of attachment in patients and therapists and their importance for the effectiveness of psychological/psychotherapeutical treatments and the therapeutic alliance in an early stage of the therapeutic process at the Outpatient Clinics of Sigmund Freud-University Vienna

-First results-

Reisinger, M., Stetina, B., Kovacovsky, Z. & Aden, J.

### **Introduction:**

The aim of the study is to determine the importance of attachment-related characteristics of patients and therapists for (1) the therapeutic alliance in an early stage and (2) subsequently for the effectiveness of the treatment. The first analysis focuses the importance of individual attachment patterns for the working alliance. In the second analysis, empirical data is analysed with regard to the significance of patients' and therapists' attachment patterns for the effectiveness of psychological treatments.

### **Methods:**

The sample of the patients is recruited from the Outpatient Clinics of Sigmund Freud University Vienna. All professionals participating in the study are (clinical) psychologists and psychotherapists in training at the same institution.

Data collection consists of various standardized measurements that are given at different times of the treatment process. Attachment patterns and characteristics are measured by RQ-2 and ECR-RD. These are given to both patients and therapists before the start of therapy (T1). In the last therapeutic session (T2) both questionnaires are given again, but to the patients only. To evaluate the effectiveness of the treatment the patients are asked to fill out the Symptom-Checklist (SCL-90) before (T1) and at the end of the therapy (T2). In addition patients and therapists are asked for the work-alliance (WAI) after every session. The drop-out-rate is also taken into account.

### **Discussion:**

One innovative feature of the ongoing study refers to the consideration of the attachment patterns not only of the patients but also of those of therapists. Furthermore, the fit of the attachment patterns of patients and therapists is also taken into account. In addition the high frequency of measuring the therapeutic alliance marks a special feature in the research landscape of attachment-related process-outcome research.

The results are intended to provide implications for building sustainable therapeutic alliance, particularly in the early phase of therapeutic treatment. Forming a relationship early on can be an initial point to reduce the high number of dropouts that are usually high in outpatient clinics. Taking the role of attachment into account can optimize the initiation, establishing and strengthening of the working-alliance in an early phase of treatment.