Adolescent Substance Abuse Patients Within the Therapeutic Alliance: An Integrative Literature Review

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Adolescent Substance Abuse Patients Within the Therapeutic Alliance

Emily Decker
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Background

- Substance use disorders (SUDs) cost the United States more than $740 billion annually
- Adolescence is the developmental period associated with the highest risk for developing a SUD due to their unique brain development
- Adolescent SUDs are associated with greater risk of incarceration, violence, drug-related MVAs, suicide, delinquency, risky sexual practices, and psychiatric disorders
- Adolescents are also less likely to seek treatment, less likely to be motivated during treatment, and less likely to stay in treatment
- The relationship between patient and provider, or therapeutic alliance, is a significant mediator of treatment engagement and outcomes

Methods

- An integrative literature review was completed within the following online databases: CINAHL, PsycINFO, ProQuest, and PubMed
- Five main concepts: substance use disorder, adolescence, interpersonal characteristics or personality, alliance or relationship
- Inclusion criteria: peer-reviewed literature written in English that was published within the last 10 years

Findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study</th>
<th>Patient Variables</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bertrand et al. (2013)</td>
<td>Concurrent mental illness, especially depressive and anxiety disorders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boswell et al. (2017)</td>
<td>“Cold/dominant” vs. “warm/submissive” personality types</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garner et al. (2008)</td>
<td>Cautious Personality Index</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urbanski et al. (2012)</td>
<td>More metacognition, more reasons for quitting, higher self efficacy and coping skills</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Purpose

To identify interpersonal characteristics of patients which influence the development of the therapeutic alliance

Tidal Model

- A person’s need to be understood → seeking validation of their experience of distress, illness, or trauma
- Support and services a person needs to live an ordinary life → emphasis on need for specific medical, psychological or social interventions
- A person’s need for emotional and physical security

Implications

- Tidal Model as it applies to nursing
  - Assessment focused on identifying safety risks
  - Assuming the role of counselor
  - Screening tools to identify at-risk patients or patients who may be difficult to engage in treatment
  - Providers can further individualize plans of care

Table 1. Summary of Interpersonal Patient Characteristics

- WORLD
  - Concurrent mental illness, especially depressive and anxiety disorders
- OTHERS
  - “Cold/dominant” vs. “warm/submissive” personality types
- SELF
  - Cautious Personality Index
  - Rational problem solving skills
  - More metacognition, more reasons for quitting, higher self efficacy and coping skills