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courses. A Student *t* test was used to analyse the data. *Findings:* The results indicated that women reported higher level of somatic symptoms than did men, $t(195.24) = 3.51, p = .001$, and higher level of anxiety than men did, $t(427) = 3.17, p = .002$. Women also reported higher level of total mental health problems than men did, $t(427) = 2.80, p = .005$. *Conclusions:* The current study revealed significant sex differences in the total mental health problems and in the domain of somatic symptoms and anxiety in Polish university students. This pattern of results may be related to gender roles and different styles of coping with stress, or it can also be connected with social expectations formulated towards women and men or with sex stereotypes.

Keywords: *sex differences, mental health, sex stereotypes, university students.*

“SALUTE ALLO SPECCHIO”: A COMPLEMENTARY THERAPY FOR FEMALE CANCER PATIENTS

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Abstract

Introduction & Aim: “Salute allo Specchio” is a psychological program for female cancer patients. It was born in June 2013 with the aim to improve patients’ well-being through the realization of group sessions during which a team of fashion and aesthetic consultants illustrates strategies to manage the effects of the disease and its treatments. Psychological variables such as depression, anxiety, quality of life were considered. A preliminary research evaluated variables’ levels before the beginning of the program (t_0). The present study shows how they vary during time, particularly at the conclusion of the project (t_1) and after three months (t_2). *Method:* Up to now, 39 patients took part to the project. The following questionnaires were administered: STAI-Y (anxiety), BDI-II (depression), EORTC QLQ-30 (quality of life). *Results:* A significant decrease ($p < 0.05$) in depression and anxiety levels was found between t_0 and t_1 . Such differences maintained their significance even after 3 months from the conclusion of the project (t_2), reflecting the non-transience of the observed effects. BDI-II mean scores are also influenced by the presence of metastasis; moreover, being subjected to chemotherapy and radiotherapy simultaneously seems to negatively impact on quality of life. *Conclusions:* The present study seems to confirm that taking part to “Salute allo Specchio” leads to a stable improvement in variables considered. It also suggests the importance of introducing support interventions beside conventional medical therapies, in order to promote a better adaptation to the disease and to improve the quality of life of the patients.

Keywords: *psychoncology, female cancer, oncology esthetic, quality of life, body image perception.*

HOW DO HOME ENVIRONMENTS CONTRIBUTE TO THE MENTAL HEALTH: CASE OF RUSSIAN ADOLESCENTS

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Abstract

One of the most crucial problems of contemporary clinical psychology and psychotherapy is searching for ecological resources of well-being and mental health. Based on the environmental psychology researches (Coolen, 2011; Edgerton, 2014; Kytä, 2004; Nartova-Bochaver et al., 2015; Nordström, 2014) we assumed the friendliness of home environment to be an important predictor of its inhabitants’ well-being. We define friendliness of home environment (FHE) as extent of how much it satisfies the inhabitants’ needs. FHE combines number of affordances providing by home to its inhabitants and its conformity to their personalities. Our tools were: developed by authors Functionality of Home Environment Questionnaire (2015), The Personal Relevance of Home Environment (2015), Authenticity Scale (Wood

et al., 2008), Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (Tennant et al., 2007). Participants were 124 adolescents ($M_{age}=14.1$, 58 males, 66 females), living in Moscow and rural area in various social contexts (regular school, gymnasium, orphanage, village home). In total, 15 variables were investigated. We have found that: 1) Well-being is stronger predicted by the personal relevance of home than by its functionality; 2) Girls are more sensitive to home friendliness than boys; 3) Moscow school students are more sensitive to anti-predictors than to predictors of well-being. Hypothesis is partly confirmed. In discussion, we consider gender differences and specificity of life plans among adolescents from different social contexts.

Keywords: home environment, well-being, authenticity, inhabitants, friendliness, social context.

PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS AND COPING STRATEGIES AMONG WOMEN WHO UNDERGO CANCER GENETIC TESTING

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Abstract

Carriers of BRCA mutations (BRCA1 and BRCA2) have a higher risk for breast and ovarian cancer. Despite cancer genetic testing is an effective instrument for cancer prevention, little is known about its psychological impact. The aim of the present study is to investigate the effect of coping strategies on the prediction of psychological distress among women who decided to undergo cancer genetic testing distinguishing them on the reasons for genetic testing. The study included three groups of women: breast and/or ovarian cancer patients ($N = 33$), breast and/or ovarian cancer survivors ($N = 22$) and people with strong family histories of breast and/or ovarian cancer ($N = 10$). All cancer patients (in remission or not) were affected by breast or ovarian cancer. Assessment of psychological distress and coping strategies were respectively obtained with the administration of the SCL-90-R and the COPE-NVI. ANOVA and multiple regression models were run. Groups of participants significantly differ in relation to somatization, depressive symptoms and hostility. In all cases, the use of avoidance coping strategies predicted higher levels of psychological distress. Results from the present study suggested the importance of the coping strategies on the prediction of psychological distress, helping psychologists to draw up appropriate intervention strategies during the cancer genetic testing.

Keywords: cancer, genetic counseling, hostility, coping.

PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF MOTHERHOOD AFTER CANCER

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Abstract

The aims of a presentation include: 1) a literature review on being a mother after the experience of cancer, 2) the implications for further research. In the first part we would like to discuss the most recent research results in the above field. Moreover, we intend to present a multidimensional tool which measures concerns related to fertility and parenthood for young adult female cancer survivors, the Reproductive Concerns After Cancer Scale designed by Jessica Gorman and researchers from the University of California. Research shows that the experience of cancer can impede the natural development and disturb the fulfilment of developmental tasks of early adulthood (Magelssen, 2008; Pivetta, 2011; Syse, 2007; Cvanarova, 2009; Langeveld, 2002; Stam, 2005; Gurney, 2009; Green, 2009). Women after cancer have less chance for giving birth, although the factors which have influence on this situation are unclear, determined both by biological and psychosocial conditions. Simultaneously, the ability to have children is an important part of quality of life. The second part will be devoted to such implications for further research as: establishing the relationship between concerns about motherhood after the experience of