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Abstracts

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is therefore to outline the general procedure explained here in brief, through case studies.

OP-249

The use of acupuncture integrated in the treatment of alcohol addiction: the Florence Day Service Center for Alcoholism's experience

EATING DISORDERS AND SUBSTANCE MISUSE

OP-248

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Experience with Bach Flower Therapy in a group of patients with eating disorders

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“The Soul needs a place” (Plotinus) is one of the sentences written in capital letters on the wall of one of the rooms in Palazzo Francisci, in Todi, the first public, residential, non-hospital building for eating disorders. In another room is written “Volo ut sis,” “I want you to be.” These two sentences embody the philosophy of an equipoise of professionals, doctors, psychiatrists, psychologists and educationalists, which has been carried out for 3 years to cope with this spreading pathology, which is a challenge to the current therapeutic patterns and which also forces us to question our own experiences continuously. The whole focus of the therapeutic project is on the building of an identity, the central core of the disease; for this purpose, together with the current cognitive behavioural therapy, relaxation and meditation techniques, musicotherapy, theatre therapy, ‘therapy of the mirror’ and philosophical counselling have been introduced in a space shared by both patients and therapists. Pharmacological therapies are reduced to a minimum and they are used only in the cases where there is a specific need linked to the presence of associated psychopathology, since there is no evidence of the long-term effectiveness of psychotropic drugs for eating disorders. Bach flowers are given to all the patients, from their arrival to their discharge, after 3 months. This study is an attempt to estimate the effects of the Bach flower remedies in the context of the above-mentioned existential problems, and their utility in a complex and structured therapeutic path like the one in Palazzo Francisci. The effects have been estimated on the basis of questionnaires generally used by the experts of these pathologies, and so, through questionnaires already validated and accepted, comparing a treated group with a control group which has used the whole integrated treatment inside the structure, except for the taking of Bach Flowers. The results, although not related to a very numerous group, seemed really interesting and worth considering. The hope is that, on the basis of these observations, other groups can investigate the matter and increase the case records, in order to offer a positive contribution to the therapeutic approach of a disease which is appearing to be the ‘Epidemic of the XX century’.

OP-250

Traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) and serious eating disorders: a pilot trial

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Background: Recent studies have shown that eating disorders (EDs) are constantly increasing in Western industrialised countries. Out of 100 girls aged 12–25 years, 8 out of 10 suffer from EDs, and among them one out of two is affected by the most well-known types such as anorexia and bulimia, the others by lesser known conditions such as eating disorder not otherwise specified (EDNOS) and binge eating disorder (BED). EDs are

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OP-249

The use of acupuncture integrated in the treatment of alcohol addiction: the Florence Day Service Center for Alcoholism's experience

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Background: For centuries, acupuncture has been used in China and other countries to treat several diseases including drug addiction. Treatment of alcoholism includes many strategies, but for some patients recidivism is common and achieving abstinence is very difficult.

Aim: To perform a study in which the traditional approach to alcohol treatment was compared with acupuncture in patients with unremitting alcoholism.

Methods: We randomly assigned 44 patients to a two-arm treatment. Twenty-two patients with at least 3 months of active alcohol dependence in spite of psychological treatment for alcoholism were enrolled in acupuncture treatment. We also included a control group that performed only self-help during the study period.

Results and conclusion: With this study, we observed that acupuncture represents a valid strategy in the treatment of alcoholism when integrated with conventional therapies. The Tuscan region has approved in 2005 a project for which acupuncture has become part of the standard array of treatments used to cure alcoholism at the Day Service Center for Alcoholism, UFM C at the Medical Center of Florence.

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very complex conditions and due to their plurifactorial character require a multidisciplinary intervention.

Methods: An observational pilot trial was conducted on five patients aged 13–17 years affected by EDs of restrictive type. They were suffering from a serious psychophysical decompensation, and therefore were hospitalised in the Unit of Pediatric Neuropsychiatry of the University Hospital of Careggi (Florence). The interdisciplinary treatment of the internist kind, maternage, psychotherapy and assisted feeding, specific for these disorders, was integrated with techniques of traditional Chinese medicine (TCM). The project included Qigong group sessions and also individual sessions where the patients were treated by integrated techniques of TCM (Tuina, moxibustion, Seven-star needles and ear acupuncture) responding to a common protocol completed by a few points selected according to the anamnesis conducted during the first visit. Considering the seriousness of the disorder and the clinical condition of the patients, somatic acupuncture was not included in treatments. The observational parameters were weight and body mass index (BMI), eating behaviour, regime and frequency of hospitalisation and the score of the psychological evaluation scales for EDs (Eating Disorder Inventory-2 (EDI-2) and BUT).

Results and conclusions: At the end of the observational period, all the considered parameters showed improvement. Given the sample exiguity, however, these results are not yet significant or generalisable but they encourage developing the integration of the two types of medicine and practice.

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OP-251

Smoking cessation with traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) and counselling: preliminary results of a randomised controlled trial

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Background: There is insufficient evidence about the effectiveness of acupuncture in smoking cessation compared to sham acupuncture, drugs and counselling (Cochrane 2011).

Aim: This randomised controlled trial (RCT) was aimed at evaluating the effectiveness of traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) (combined or not with counselling) in smoking cessation compared to sham acupuncture and counselling.

Methods: A total of 477 smokers were randomised in three groups; they received three sessions of true TCM (pharmacopuncture, Seven Star Needles and auriculotherapy groups B and C) and sham TCM (group A). Sham pharmacopuncture did not include the injection of the solution in chosen points but the simulation in inactive points; it was the same for Seven Star Needles and auriculotherapy. Groups A and B also participated in nine sessions of counselling. At the end of the treatment, 6 months and 1 year after, it was evaluated whether the participants were still smokers through the Fagerstrom nicotine addiction score. Seventy percent of those who declared to quit smoking were controlled measuring the concentration of carbon monoxide in breath at the annual follow-up.

Results: At recruitment, the subjects smoked on average 22.7 cigarettes per day, the mean value on Fagerstrom nicotine addiction score was 6.6 without significant difference in the three groups. After the treatment, non-smokers were 58.2% in group A, 59.9% in group B and 49.4% in group C ($p = 0.128$). At the end of the treatment, the Fagerstrom test score dropped to 2.1 (group A), 2.0 (group B) and 2.5 (group C); there was no significant difference between the groups A and B as well as a significant difference compared to group C. After 6 months, the percentage of non-smokers was lower (35.1%, 35.6% and 30.1%, respectively) without significant differences; moreover, the Fagerstrom test score increased to 3.9 (group A), 3.8 (group B) and 4.1 (group C). After 1 year, the percentage of non-smokers was significantly lower in group C (20.1%) than in groups A (33.1%) and B (34.9%). The Fagerstrom test score increased to 4.0 (group A), 3.6 (group B) and 4.5 (group C). There is a significant difference between group C and groups A and B.

Conclusions: TCM is an effective treatment for smoking cessation used as a single technique and especially combined with counselling. In line with the literature, the difference between true and sham treatment is not significant, which confirms that sham acupuncture is not a true placebo group.

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