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ABSTRACTS

Reading and Evaluating Quantitative Research in Body Psychotherapy

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Abstract

Many arguments have been made in the literature for why research is considered important for health practitioners. One of the most important has to do with the continuing growth of practitioners and guarding against falling into practices that are based only on personal opinion. While most body psychotherapists would endorse the idea that research can affect and inform practice, many would also admit that they do not regularly read quantitative or evidence-based research studies, the type of research that can be generalized to their own clients. Feeling comfortable with, and using suitable criteria for reading quantitative research articles and reports, is often experienced as difficult. It requires the use of concepts and information that may not be employed in everyday clinical practice settings. Reviewing that content and its associated skills can help to make it more available, so that one may adequately critique and get more out of one's professional reading and ultimately, provide better service to clients. To that end, in this paper three related areas central to understanding quantitative research are reviewed: (a) the logic of research design; (b) how internal and external validity are judged; and (c) the basics of statistical inference.

Keywords: body-oriented therapy, body psychotherapy, dance movement therapy, research methods for clinicians, quantitative research, research design

Biodynamic Psychotherapy for Trauma Recovery: A Pilot Study

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Abstract

Body-oriented approaches for treating trauma survivors focus on automatic processing, and aim to address the physiological effects of trauma directly within the body itself, without primary

reliance on conscious recall. This longitudinal pilot study used standardized pre and post-intervention measures to evaluate the feasibility, acceptability and impact of Biodynamic Interventions, delivered six months apart, on the mind-body healing, of eight women receiving domestic violence support services in Western Ireland. Findings revealed that women were willing to engage in treatment, and had sustained improvements in distress, quality of life, and use of social support, over one year. More research on integrative approaches to trauma recovery is needed.

Keywords: Biodynamic psychotherapy, trauma recovery, domestic violence, women's mental health, integrative trauma therapy

Correlations Between Tests for Grounding, Breathing and Self-efficacy in Individuals With and Without Chronic Pain: Who is “Standing with Both Feet on the Ground?”

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Abstract

Postural balance (grounding) and breathing are basic psychomotor functions that can be disturbed in patients with chronic pain. Self-efficacy plays an important role in treatment programs that address improved coping with pain. The aim of this study was to evaluate whether balance and breathing tests could discriminate between a group of patients with chronic pain and a healthy group, and to test their correlations to psychometric tests. A conceptualization of grounding that incorporates physical and psychological factors is proposed. Methods: In this cross-sectional study 62 patients with chronic pain and 40 healthy individuals were examined using physical tests to measure postural balance and breathing, and psychometric tests to measure self-efficacy and pain. Relationships among the measures were analyzed. Results: Significant differences ($p < 0.001$) were found between the patient group and the control group in all balance and breathing tests and in the self-efficacy tests. Participants who performed correctly in two or more of the balance tests were ten times more likely to report high self-efficacy than those who did not. Conclusion: The balance, breathing and self-efficacy tests discriminated significantly between the groups. Concurrent validity between some balance tests and self-efficacy could be shown. Further studies to confirm predictive validity should be done.

Keywords: chronic pain, grounding, breathing, rotation, postural balance, self-efficacy

Semantic Expressions of the Body Boundary Personality in Person-Centred Psychotherapy

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Abstract

This study is based on the assumption that the exposure and internalisation of social values, and behavioural expectations represent the most important influence in the formation of body boundary finiteness (Fisher & Cleveland, 1958) and the development of psychological disturbances (Rogers, 1951, 1961). Given this relationship between body boundary formation and Roger's influence on the development of body psychotherapy, this correlational study examines the use of words and changes in body boundary finiteness of twelve patients attending person-centred psychotherapy. It does this by measuring the strengths of associations between barrier imagery, as measured using the Body Type Dictionary (BTD) (Wilson, 2006), and the general semantic content, as measured using the Linguistic Inquiry Word Count text analysis program (LIWC) (Pennebaker, Booth, & Francis, 2007), as well as progressive psychotherapy sessions in the verbal behaviour of Low and High Barrier patients. The findings of this study might benefit body psychotherapy practitioners to obtain a deeper insight into the body boundary and its regulatory function of inter- and intra-psychic processes.

Keywords: body boundaries, psychotherapy, semantics, primordial cognition, person-centred psychotherapy.

Interoception: A Measure of Embodiment or Attention?

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Abstract

Interoception provides a link for the affective and cognitive mechanisms of embodiment. fMRI studies suggest that brain areas known to mediate selective attention, are also relevant for interoceptive awareness (IA). Yet the relationship between attention, embodiment and interoception is poorly understood. This study attempts to understand this relationship by considering whether IA is possible when attention is compromised. Using two versions of an IA task, the standard mental tracking task (MMT) and a modified version of the same task, IA of 20 healthy participants (9 female, 11 male), was measured. A significant difference in mean IA was shown between the tasks with the modified mental tracking task (MMTT) showing greater sensitivity. These findings suggest that IA is possible even when attention is compromised, which supports somatic theories such as the somatic marker hypothesis. Most importantly this implies that IA may be a good measure of somatic awareness and may be useful as a measure in body psychotherapy research and clinical practice.

Keywords: Interoception, attention, embodied cognition, measures of embodiment, somatic awareness

Grasping and Transforming the Embodied Experience of Oppression

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Abstract

Research has established the crucial role of the body in navigating experiences of social difference and mediating the traumatic impact of oppression. Although conceptual frameworks

from education, counseling, and critical embodiment studies offer powerful lenses through which to view these experiences of oppression, existing social justice models (e.g., anti-oppressive education, multicultural counseling and social work) are insufficiently inclusive of the body's role in navigating oppressive social interactions. Conversely, existing models of working with embodied experience (e.g. somatic education and somatic counseling/psychotherapy) are insufficiently attentive to the role of social power in interpersonal relations. Drawing on current research on the embodied experience of oppression, this paper articulates an integrative model for addressing problematic experiences in relation to the body and social justice.

Keywords: embodiment, oppression, social justice, diversity, anti-oppressive education, multicultural counseling, experiential learning