

# ISTRAŽIVANJA U PSIHOTERAPIJI: DUŠEVNO ZDRAVLJE ŽENA

## / RESEARCH IN PSYCHOTHERAPY: WOMEN'S MENTAL HEALTH

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Istraživanja u psihoterapiji potiču razvoj, znanstvenu kvalitetu i društveni značaj psihoterapije, te promoviraju korištenje znanstvenih rezultata u psihoterapijskoj praksi, edukaciji i kreiranju politika. Imajući ove činjenice na umu, u svakom broju Psihoterapije ćemo prikazati nekoliko recentnih istraživanja u psihoterapiji koja se odnose na određeno područje. Za ovaj broj smo izabrali duševno zdravlje žena u kontekstu psihoterapije. Jedan od razloga je taj što duševni poremećaji i tegobe različito zahvaćaju muškarce i žene: neki su češći u žena, npr. depresija i anksiozni poremećaji, neki su jedinstveni za ženski rod, npr. perimenstrualni disforični poremećaj, poslijeporođajna depresija, a drugi duševni poremećaji poput shizofrenije ili bipolarnog poremećaja raspoloženja se, iako nema razlike u stopama pobola, različito manifestiraju u žena i muškaraca.

Research in psychotherapy encourages the development, scientific quality and social significance of psychotherapy, and promotes the use of scientific results in psychotherapeutic practice, education and policy making. Having these facts in mind, in each issue of *Psychotherapy* we will present several examples of recent research in psychotherapy related to a specific area. For this issue we chose women's mental health in the context of psychotherapy. One of the reasons for this is that mental disorders and problems affect men and women differently: some of them are more common in women, such as depression and anxiety disorders, and some are unique to the female gender, such as perimenstrual dysphoric disorder, postpartum depression. Other mental disorders, such as schizophrenia or bipolar mood disorder, although differing in regard to rates, manifest differently in women and men.

In addition to various manifestations of mental disorders mentioned above,

Osим različitih manifestacija duševnih poremećaja, rezultati istraživanja Liddona i suradnika izneseni u članku *Gender differences in preferences for psychological treatment, coping strategies, and triggers to help-seeking* objavljenom u časopisu *British Journal of Clinical Psychology* pokazuju da muškarci i žene pokazuju različite preferencije u psihoterapiji koje su značajne i treba ih uzeti u obzir. Dosađajna istraživanja i rezultati provedenih metaanaliza ukazuju na to da žene više koriste strategije suočavanja usmjerene na emocije nego muškarci. S druge strane, preferencije u psihoterapiji su do sada malo istraživane. Rezultati ovog istraživanja pokazuju da je spol ispitanika prediktor u 25% izbora psihoterapijskog pravca, da se ženama više sviđa psihoterapija nego muškarcima vjerojatno zbog težišta na dijeljenju emocija. Muškarci su značajno više birali grupe podrške, vjerojatno zbog težišta na dijeljenju informacija, koriste više seks i pornografiju za suočavanje sa stresom i smatraju da postoji nedostatak psihoterapijskih pravaca koji su prilagođeni potrebama muškaraca. Većina ispitanika nije iskazala preferencije u pogledu spola terapeuta, no među onima koji jesu, muškarci su nešto više, a žene značajno više preferirali psihoterapeutkinju. U praksi stoga treba uvažavati činjenice da su muškarci manje skloni tražiti pomoć kada imaju psihičke tegobe te da muškarci i

the results of the research conducted by Liddon et al. in the article "Gender differences in preferences for psychological treatment, coping strategies and triggers to help-seeking" published in the *British Journal of Clinical Psychology* show that men and women also have different preferences when it comes to psychotherapy. Previous research and meta-analysis results indicated that women use emotion-oriented strategies more than men. On the other hand, preferences in psychotherapy have been explored very little so far. The results of this research show that gender is a predictor of 25% of the psychotherapeutic choices and that women prefer psychotherapy more than men, probably because of the focus on emotional sharing. Men are significantly more likely to choose support groups, probably due to their focus on sharing information, they use sex and pornography more to cope with stress and believe there is a lack of psychotherapeutic approaches tailored to the needs of men. Most of the respondents did not show preferences regarding the sex of the therapist, but among those who did, men expressed a little more preference and women much more preference for a female psychotherapist. In practice, therefore, it should be borne in mind that men are less inclined to seek help when they have mental problems, and that men and women show significant differences in certain aspects of psychotherapy, coping strategies and help-seeking behaviour.



žene pokazuju značajne razlike u pojedinim aspektima psihoterapije, strategijama suočavanja i traženja pomoći.

Istraživanja neuroplastičnosti mozga koja su posljednjih desetljeća u velikom uzletu su dokazala da se aktivnost i struktura mozga mijenja ne samo patološkim procesima i starenjem nego i učenjem raznih vještina i psihoterapijom. Istraživanje Manckea i suradnika prikazano u članku *Assessing the marks of change: how psychotherapy alters the brain structure in women with borderline personality disorder* objavljenom u časopisu *Journal of Psychiatry & Neuroscience* je imalo za cilj ispitati mijenja li psihoterapija strukturu mozga u pacijentica s graničnim poremećajem osobnosti. Naime, dosadašnja istraživanja su dokazala da psihoterapija može promijeniti funkciju u određenim područjima mozga, a ovim istraživanjem se pokazalo da je nakon 12 tjedana sudjelovanja u dijalektičko-biheviornalnoj psihoterapiji došlo do povećanja sive tvari u područjima mozga ispitanica koja su od kritične važnosti za regulaciju emocija i funkcije višeg reda kao što je mentalizacija. Ova otkrića će svakako pomoći razumijevanju mehanizama promjene u psihoterapiji i razvoju psihoterapijskih intervencija koje su temeljene na znanju iz neurobiologije.

U istraživanju *Effectiveness of interpersonal psychotherapy-trauma for depressed women with childhood*

Research on neuroplasticity of the brain in recent decades has shown that brain activity and structure are changing not only through pathological processes and aging but also by learning various skills and through psychotherapy. The paper by Mancke et al. entitled "Assessing the marks of change: how psychotherapy alters the brain structure in women with borderline personality disorder" published in the *Journal of Psychiatry & Neuroscience* aimed to examine whether psychotherapy can also modify the brain structure of patients with borderline personality disorder (BPD). Previous research has shown that psychotherapy may change the function in certain areas of the brain, and this research found that after 12 weeks of dialectical-behavioural psychotherapy, the grey matter volume of brain regions that are critically implicated in emotion regulation and higher-order functions, such as mentalizing, are significantly increased. These findings certainly help in understanding the mechanisms of change in psychotherapy and may foster the development of neurobiologically informed therapeutic interventions.

In the study entitled "Effectiveness of interpersonal psychotherapy-trauma for depressed women with childhood abuse histories" published in the *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, Duberstein et al. compared the results of treating depressed women with sexual abuse histories with either Interpersonal Psychotherapy-Trauma (IPT-T) or tradi-

*abuse histories* objavljenom u *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, Duberstein i suradnici su usporedili rezultate tretmana depresivnih pacijentica s povješću seksualnog zlostavljanja kod kojih je primijenjena interpersonalna psihoterapija (IPT) ili tradicionalna klinička psihoterapija. Istraživanje je pokazalo da pacijentice s povješću seksualnog zlostavljanja čine više od 20 posto pacijentica u javnozdravstvenim centrima za mentalno zdravlje. U istraživanje su uključene 162 žene s velikom depresivnom epizodom i povješću seksualnog zlostavljanja prije 18. godine. IPT ili uobičajena klinička psihoterapija (različite psihoterapije ovisno o terapeutu) su primijenjene tijekom 16 seansi uz praćenje 8 i 20 mjeseci nakon tretmana. Rezultati u smislu poboljšanja depresivnih simptoma su bili na sličnoj razini, dok je IPT polučila značajno bolje rezultate u poboljšanju posttraumatskih simptoma i socijalnog funkcioniranja. Autori zaključuju da se psihoterapije temeljene na dokazima moraju ponuditi kroz sustav javnog zdravstva, osobito vulnerabilnim skupinama pacijenata.

Malo je psihodinamski orijentiranih terapeuta istraživalo prijateljstvo iz perspektive self-psihologije. Mnogi su pretpostavljali, no istraživanje Piotrowskog, prvo ove vrste *Selfobject Experience in Long-Term Friendships of Midlife Women Psychoanalytic Social Work* objav-

tional Clinic Psychotherapy (CP). IPT-T is an adaptation of a time-limited therapy that focuses on reducing psychological distress by resolving interpersonal conflicts and strengthening social relationships, while CP is a psychotherapy of choice depending on the psychotherapist's training and approach. The study included 162 women who participated in 16 free sessions of IPT-T or CP. The effects were followed up 8 and 20 months later. The results in terms of improving depression symptoms were on a similar level, while IPT had significantly better results in improving posttraumatic symptoms and social functioning. The authors conclude that evidence-based psychotherapies like IPT-T are needed in the public healthcare system, where some of the most vulnerable patients receive treatment.

A few psychodynamically oriented therapists explored friendship from the perspective of self-psychology. Many of them made assumptions, but the research of Piotrowski "Selfobject Experience in Long-Term Friendships of Midlife Women", published in the *Journal of Psychoanalytic Social Work*, is the first to demonstrate through a rigorous qualitative research process that selfobject needs are, in fact, experienced in friendships. Middle-aged women are the population with the highest rate of depression. In contemporary representations of friendships in reality television, women are portrayed as emotionally unstable, quarrelsome and prone to aggressive be-



ljeno u časopisu *Psychoanalytic Social Work* je pokazalo kroz rigorozno kvalitativno istraživanje kako se izražavaju potrebe za self-objektom u prijateljstvu. Srednjovječne žene su populacija s najvećom stopom pobola od depresije. U suvremenim prikazima prijateljstava, npr. kroz *reality* televiziju, žene se učestalo svađaju, prikazane su kao emocionalno nestabilne, sklone agresivnom ponašanju. Društvene mreže pružaju kvantitetu više nego kvalitetu obezvrjeđujući vrijednosti dugotrajnih prijateljstava. Uvrede u prijateljskim odnosima čine žene očajnima i zbunjanim. Suprotno popularnim prikazima, temeljne psihološke potrebe – potrebe za self-objektom su ispunjene u prijateljstvu. Ova fenomenološka studija je istražila kako je 13 srednjovječnih žena doživljavalo svoja dugotrajna prijateljstva. Čimbenici koji potiču izgradnju strukture i koheziju su prisutni u prijateljstvu. Znajući kako naše klijentice razvijaju prijateljske odnose, možemo imati bolji klinički uvid u njihove potrebe za self-objektom jer se obrasci koji se događaju u prijateljstvu zapravo ponavljaju i u drugim odnosima. Pružanjem psihodinamskog razumijevanja prijateljstva produbljuje se terapijsko razumijevanje selfa.

Zanimljivo istraživanje Dalya i suradnika objavljeno u članku *The female spouse: A process of separation when a husband 'comes out' as gay* istražuje

haviour. Social networks provide more quantity than quality by undermining the value of long-term friendships. The recent assault on friendship has left many feeling confused and desperate. Contrary to popular displays, basic psychological needs – selfobject needs – are indeed met in friendships. This phenomenological study offers an in-depth exploration of how 13 midlife women experienced their long-term friendships. Factors promoting structure building and cohesion strengthening are present in friendships. Learning how one's client approaches friendships can offer clinical insight into selfobject needs, since one's pattern of approaching relationships is enacted in friendships. Offering a psychodynamic understanding of friendship deepens the therapeutic understanding of self.

An interesting study by Daly et al. entitled "The female spouse: A process of separation when a husband 'comes out' as gay" explores the stories of heterosexual women who experienced a husband coming out as gay and a consequential marital separation. An interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) was used in the research. Loss, anger, spousal empathy and concerns regarding societal prejudice are reported. Additional stress is experienced when others minimize the experience due to the gay sexual orientation of their husband. The experience of positive communication with their husbands during and after the disclosure helps in the resolution of the emotional injury. Women eventually 'let

iskustva žena koje su doživjele muževljevo otkrivanje homoseksualne orijentacije i posljedični razvod braka. U istraživanju je korištena interpretativna fenomenološka analiza (IPA). Bilježi se osjećaj gubitka, ljutnja, empatija supružnika i zabrinutost glede društvenih predrasuda. Žene doživljavaju dodatni stres kada drugi nastoje umanjiti jačinu njihove emocionalne reakcije zbog homoseksualne orijentacije muža. Iskustvo pozitivne komunikacije tijekom i nakon otkrivanja pomaže prorađi emocionalne traume. Žene konačno „puštaju“ svoga muža kroz proces rekonceptualizacije selfa kao odvojenog, razvedenog. Rezultati ukazuju na važnost podrške ženama da preusmjere svoje potrebe tijekom i nakon razvoda braka. Posebno se ističe važnost pružanja podrške zbog rastave braka bez osude radije nego usmjeravanje na homoseksualnu orijentaciju supružnika.

go' of their husband through the process of reconceptualising the self as separated. Findings indicate the importance of supporting women to re-focus on their needs during and following marital dissolution. The importance of non-judgmental support for marital loss, rather than a focus on the gay sexual orientation of the spouse, was highlighted.

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