

ALEXITHYMIA AS PROGNOSTIC FACTOR FOR MAINTAINING ABSTINENCE FROM ALCOHOL DEPENDENCE

**Piotr Januszko^{1,2}, Maria Radziwoń-Zaleska¹, Bartłomiej Gmaj¹,
Dariusz M. Myszka¹, Maria Kostecka-Walenta¹,
Joanna Wilkowska¹, Daria Matoszko¹, Halina Matsumoto¹**

¹Katedra i Klinika Psychiatria Akademii Medycznej w Warszawie

²Instytut Psychologii Klinicznej Szkoły Wyższej Psychologii Społecznej
w Warszawie

ALEXITHYMIA AS A PROGNOSTIC FACTOR FOR MAINTAINING ABSTINENCE FROM ALCOHOL DEPENDENCE

ABSTRACT – Several authors have shown that alexithymia characterize patients suffering from substance abuse. The purpose of this investigation was to: a) measure alexithymia in 44 newly abstinent alcohol-dependent persons and b) test the hypothesis that alexithymia is a negative factor for maintaining abstinence. Subjects completed the Toronto Alexithymia Scale (TAS-26) and the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory during their first and last week of group-oriented therapy from alcohol dependence. The control group included 33 healthy subjects.

Fifty one per cent dependent subject before and 31% – after treatment scored in the „alexithymic” range but the therapy didn't influenced the average alexithymia scores (differences were not significant). Alcohol-dependent subjects' average alexithymia and anxiety scores, before as well as after therapy, were higher than average scores of the control group.

At the 36-month point, 26 outpatients met criteria for abuse or alcohol dependence and 46,2% were abstinent. Subjects who relapsed obtained significantly higher (before and after therapy): the total score for the TAS-26 and the factor score associated with the ability to identify one's feelings than subjects who were abstinent. Stepwise multiple linear regression showed that the after therapy total score for the TAS-26 significantly predicted abstinence. The results may suggest that alexithymia is a negative prognostic factor for maintaining abstinence.

Key words: alexithymia, anxiety, abstinence, prognostic factor.