

Abstract

**Lundblad, S. (2003) Aspects of Psychotherapy
*emotional experiences and personal development***

This doctoral thesis concerns different aspects of psychotherapy and includes five empirical studies of which the first three are based on data from patients that received psychotherapy at Sahlgrenska University Hospital sometime during the period 1994-2002.

Study I was exploratory and focused on the nature and persistence of change in eight severely depressed women following long-term psychoanalytic psychotherapy. The patient group as a whole showed substantial improvements in areas such as degree of depression, interpersonal and emotional functioning, and work capacity.

Study II aimed at exploring whether a patient and her psychotherapist can recollect the patient's emotions and personal development, as experienced during ongoing psychotherapy. The results indicated that the patient remembered the intensity of her emotions poorly. There was no concordance between patient and psychotherapist with regard to their recall of these reactions. Patient and psychotherapist were, however, concordant in their evaluation of the patient's personal development.

Study III investigated the possible association between patients' evaluation of their overall emotional reaction and personal development. High overall emotional reaction (negative or positive) was positively correlated with high levels of personal development in the beginning and end of the treatment, but not in the middle phase.

Studies IV and V aimed at investigating how common it is among psychologist (who were also psychotherapists) to experience sexual attraction to patients and/or to experience fear of patients during psychotherapy, and how these feelings are expressed and handled. A questionnaire was sent to 226 psychologists. 185 respondents returned the questionnaires, resulting in an 82% response rate. Seventy-five percent of the respondents reported that they had been sexual attracted to a patient and 70% reported having felt fear of one or more patient(s). The most common ways of managing feelings of attraction and of fear were to process them internally, discuss the situation with colleagues and/or consult a supervisor.

The finding from the present thesis reflects the complexity of psychotherapy with regard to how it affects the patient, the psychotherapist, and the relation between the two.

Key words: emotion, personal development, psychotherapy

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