COGNITIVE DISTORTIONS IN DEPRESSED WOMEN: TRAIT OR MOOD STATE DEPENDENT?

S. Batmaz[1], S. Kocbiyik[2]

[1]Psychiatry Clinic, Mersin State Hospital, Mersin, Turkey ; [2]Psychiatry Clinic, Ataturk Training and Research Hospital, Ankara, Turkey

Introduction & Aims: Cognitive distortions play an important role in the onset and maintenance of depressive disorders. It has not been investigated whether these distortions have trait like properties or are dependent on mood states. This study aims to find out this aspect. Our hypothesis is that as depression remits, the frequency of cognitive distortions will lessen.

Methods: For this study female outpatients (178 acutely depressed & 168 in remission) and their healthy female relatives (177 controls) presenting to the psychiatry clinics of three hospitals in Turkey were recruited. The participants were diagnosed according to DSM criteria by MINI. The participants were evaluated by IDS-C, and they filled out the Cognitive Distortions Questionnaire. The groups were compared with each other on these scales by appropriate statistical methods.

Results: Except for the self-blame subscale scores, the highest scores were found in the acutely depressed patients, and the lowest scores in the healthy controls. The same subscales also managed to differentiate the patients in remission from the controls. Self-blame scores were found to be mood state dependent.

Conclusion: These results suggest that cognitive distortions, except for the self-blame subscale, remain activated even after depression remits. Therefore, cognitive distortions related to self-criticism, helplessness, hopelessness and preoccupation with danger should be continuously monitored, and targeted for therapeutic interventions, even after remission is achieved. Yet, the content analysis of these distortions highlight the fact that the most important depressive distortions may be related to self-criticism, which is a component of the classical cognitive triad.