

P-558 - DOES ANOREXIA NERVOSA RESULT FROM A CONFLICT BETWEEN DIFFERENT FORMS OF PERSONAL IDENTITY?

A.Pittock

Medical School, University of Aberdeen, Aberdeen, UK

Introduction: Theories surrounding anorexia nervosa's aetiology have changed constantly over the years. Current thought suggests a combination of several different environmental triggers influenced by culture, which include: developing sexuality, competitive environments, the media and the patient's relationship with their father, among others. These all point to a potential conflict in the patient's sense of personal identity. Objectives - The objective of this paper was to consider the different philosophical interpretations of identity and see if they could be applied to our understanding of anorexia nervosa. Aim - The aim was to see whether in fact anorexia nervosa results from a conflict between different personal identities.

Methods: Analysis of various philosophical ideas of personal identity was performed to consider their validity as theories and form a coherent idea of personal identity. This knowledge was then applied to the principles of anorexia in an attempt to increase our understanding of the disorder.

Results: No single philosophical theory of personal identity is completely sufficient and psychological research would indicate that identity is a combination of psychological, physical, group and third person. In anorexia nervosa many of these parts of identity can be negatively affected.

Conclusions: Anorexia seems to result from a loss of control over at least one form of identity. Possible conflicts can arise between a psychological sense of self and the physical reality or between a first person view and third person view of the sufferer. Treatment should seek to resolve these crises.