

P01-283 - THE RELATION BETWEEN SEVERITY OF CARDIAC ILLNESS AND ANXIETY

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Background: Pathological anxiety is characterized by the absence of a reason for anxiety. However, the presence of fear provoking stimuli does not exclude the possibility for a pathological course of anxiety, i.e. "Pathological Realangst". An example are hypochondriac anxieties in patients with severe somatic disorders. An open question is to what degree severity of somatic morbidity is related with anxiety.

Method: In 209 patients (37,8% women) from a cardiology inpatient unit general anxiety, heart-related anxiety, progression anxiety, and job-anxiety were measured. Physicians rated the degree of severity of the somatic (heart-)disorder using the Multidimensional Severity of Morbidity Rating (MSM rating). Relationships between the degree of anxiety and somatic morbidity parameters were investigated.

Results: Anxiety did not or to a very low degree correlate with objective indicators of somatic morbidity. Subjective suffering showed a moderate significant correlation with heart-related anxiety and progression anxiety, and was also correlated with sick leave duration.

Conclusion: Severity of somatic illness is a multidimensional phenomenon and not regularly related in a special way with anxiety, except the dimension of subjective suffering. Pathological fears, even when occurring in the context of somatic disorders, are not related to objective endangerment, but have to be described as mental problems.