Assessment of aggression in psychiatric patients diagnosed with comorbid personality disorder

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Introduction: Aggression, self-directed and directed to other people leads to a high level of suffering, self-destructive and suicidal behavior, as well as interpersonal problems and social consequences.

Objective: To identify if the presence of comorbid personality disorder in a sample of psychiatric patients correlates with higher level of aggressive feelings and behavior.

Methods: The study sample comprised 150 psychiatric patients mean age of 37.87 years (SD=10,22, min=18, max=72), 62% females (N=93), and males 38% (N=57). According to ICD-10 criteria the patients were diagnosed by their psychiatrists as follows: schizophrenia spectrum (42.1%), mood disorders (36.4%) and anxiety disorders (21.4%). Twenty-four percent of the whole (n=37) sample was also diagnosed with comorbid personality disorders. The Aggression Questionnaire, BPAQ (Buss & Perry, 1992) were applied to ascertain the Total level of aggression, as well as Physical aggression, Verbal aggression, Anger and Hostility, according to the 4 factors scale.

Results: Psychiatric patients diagnosed with comorbid personality disorders compared with those without personality disorder displayed significant higher Total aggression (p=0.02), as well as Physical aggression (p=0.009), Verbal aggression (p=0.05), Anger (p=0.01) and Hostility (p=0.01).

Conclusions: Aggression should be a specific subject of existing therapeutic approach for psychiatric patients with comorbid personality disorder, in order to reduce feelings of anger and hostility, verbal and psychical aggression and its emotional, physiological and behavioral negative consequences.

Key words: psychiatric patients, comorbid personality disorder, aggression.

Figure 1. Diagnostic structure of the sample

Figure 2. Patients with comorbid personality disorders (%)

Table 1. Comparison of Aggression scores in patients diagnosed with comorbid personality disorders and those without personality disorder (ANOVA)

Total aggression	p=0.02
Physical aggression	p=0.009
Verbal aggression	p=0.05
Anger	p=0.01
Hostility	p=0.01