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PERSONALITY AND PSYCHOPATHOLOGY IN FIBROMYALGIA: A CASE-CONTROL STUDY

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Abstract

Aim. The aim of this study was to investigate the prevalence of Personality Disorders and Personality Organization with clinician report interviews in a group of patients with Fibromyalgia (FM), compared to patients with Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA).

Methods. In this cross-sectional study, 32 consecutive female with FM and 39 with RA were assessed by: Structured Interview of Personality Organization (STIPO), Structured Clinical Interview of Personality Disorder (SCID-5-PD), Beck Depression Inventory-II (BDI-II), Toronto Alexithymia Scale (TAS-20), Visual Analogue Scale for pain (VAS), and the SF-36 questionnaire for the Health related Quality of Life.

Results. FM patients reported significantly higher levels of depressive symptoms ($p=.012$) and difficulty in identifying emotions ($p=.021$) compared to RA patients, and lower scores for quality of life in both the physical and mental components of the SF-36 ($p<.05$). Regarding the personality organization, FM patients reported higher score in the identity diffusion, object relations, primitive defense and coping style subscales of the STIPO compared to RA patients ($p<.001$), suggesting a higher prevalence of borderline level of personality organization in FM patients. The SCID-PD showed that FM patients had a higher prevalence of personality disorders compared to RA patients ($p = .001$), with 35.5% of FM vs. 5.1% of RA patients showing a personality disorder.

Conclusion. The present study revealed a higher prevalence of personality disorders and a more pathological level of personality organization in FM patients compared to RA patients. What is more, FM patients showed higher depressive symptoms and alexithymia, and a lower quality of life than RA patients. Further studies would be needed to better evaluate the impact of personality disorders and pathological levels of personality organization on quality of life in chronic pain patients.