

Abstract

The aim of the diploma thesis "Maternal Identification in Anorexia Nervosa" is to map the developmental context of the onset of anorexia nervosa in female patients related with the formation of relationships with immediate caregivers and the detailed focus on the daughter's relationship with the mother. The theoretical part offers a cross-section of psychoanalytic theories that specifically deal with such process. These are mainly the object relations theory, the attachment theory as well as the recent theory of mentalization. The initial premise of the whole work is the femininity itself, the age of the patients when the period of adolescence and female gender are amongst the main risk factors for the development of anorexia nervosa and contribute to the disproportion between male and female patients. The concept of identification between daughter and mother within the separation-individuation process is described both in early childhood and during adolescence.

The empirical part focuses on a particular examination of the patient's relationships with primary caregivers, the immediate environment from childhood to adulthood and the factors involved in the development of the disease. Through a semi-structured in-depth interview, the study monitors key moments of psychosocial development in four cases, focusing on their relationship with mother. Using interpretative phenomenological analysis offers a detailed insight of individual statements.

The results of this work pointed out the dysfunction of family relationships in all respondents. Insufficient parental support, and a strong emotional alienation with parents, especially with the mother. The main areas identified were the lack of time spent together, loneliness, lack of interest, understanding and empathy. A significantly disrupted relationship with the mother and her detached approach can be an obstacle to the adequate individualization-separation process of the daughter as well as to the development of a sufficiently strong identity during adolescence. Their consequence could be, amongst other things, the onset of anorexia nervosa.