Urszula Ciszewska-Psujek

Narrative skill of men addicted to alcohol

Alcohol dependence is the chronic disease which damages many systems and organs. The toxic influence of alcohol on the central nervous system leads to durable numbers and size reduction of neurons and neural connections, especially within the frontal structures, the limbic system and the cerebellum. These changes have the consequence in cognitive impairments including executive cognitive impairments and memory deficits and emotional information processing disorder. Alcohol addiction and its effects on the cognitive functioning of man affect the course of psychological therapy and the process of social reintegration of people affected by the disease.

The topic discussed in this doctoral dissertation concerns the state of narrative skill of men addicted to alcohol, maintaining abstinence for two to eight weeks and undergoing alcohol therapy. Alcoholic disease is described in various scientific disciplines (medicine, psychology, sociology and pedagogy). However, the literature on the subject lacks research on the language of people addicted to alcohol. Therefore, cognitive needs related to the description of language behaviors in the discussed disease entity as well as social – the desire to describe language deficits characteristic for people addicted to alcohol and formulation of language strategies taken in a holistic therapeutic approach that could help the process of healing abstinence contributed to the choice of the topic.

Theses and conclusions formulated in this dissertation are the result of thorough and interdisciplinary reading of the literature on the subject and analysis of empirical data collected during several months of meetings with patients of the alcohol addiction therapy ward (the study group) and patients with orthopedic injuries (the control group). Narrative skills were described, and based on it were characterized behavior and language disorders characteristic of a group of 15 men – patients of the 24-hour Department of Alcohol Addiction Therapy Department of the Neuropsychiatric Hospital of Professor Mieczysław Kaczyński in Lublin. Quantitative and qualitative analyzes of the resulting narrative statements allowed us to determine three types of language disorder spectra in alcohol dependence, indicate similarities and differences to speech disorders appearing in other pathologies of the central nervous system, and enabled the determination of therapeutic strategies to improve the language functioning of alcohol addicts taking therapy alcohol and aimed at social reintegration. Due to the impossibility of assessing the cognitive and linguistic functioning of the subjects prior to alcoholism, the narrative skill test also included 15 non-

alcohol men who were patients of the Trauma and Orthopedic Department of the Provincial Specialist Hospital of Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński in Lublin and matched to men from the study group due to social characteristics. The research extends the subject of modern speech therapy and sets out further directions of speech therapy research, aimed at describing language behavior in other types of addiction.

The dissertation consists of 6 chapters, concerning: the state of research on alcohol addiction and its consequences for human functioning in the biological, psychological and social spheres, narrative as a cognitive and linguistic category, research methodology, description of the narrative skill of men addicted and non-addicted to alcohol, coherence of the narrative statements of the respondents and the cognitive capabilities and language behavior of men addicted to alcohol.

Urszula Ciszewska-Pryjele