

# THE EFFECTIVENESS OF TEACHING APPLIED TRANSFERENCE FOCUSED PSYCHOTHERAPY ON THE ATTITUDES AND TECHNICAL CONFIDENCE OF PSYCHIATRY TRAINEES IN MALAYSIA, ON THE MANAGEMENT OF PATIENTS WITH PERSONALITY DISORDER.

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## INTRODUCTION

- There are recognized systemic failings of services to manage patients with personality disorders. The Royal College of Psychiatrist has recommended the need for support and staff training in meeting the complex needs of these patients.
- Psychiatric trainees are often the “first responders” to manage patients with personality disorders but receive little specific training in this.
- Transference Focused Psychotherapy (TFP) is a manualized evidence-based treatment for severe personality disorders based on a psychodynamic approach that focuses on object relations theory.
- There is an expanding experience in applying TFP in different psychiatric settings. While there is evidence of effective training of applied TFP in the UK, Europe, South Africa and India, TFP training in Malaysia is a relatively new concept.

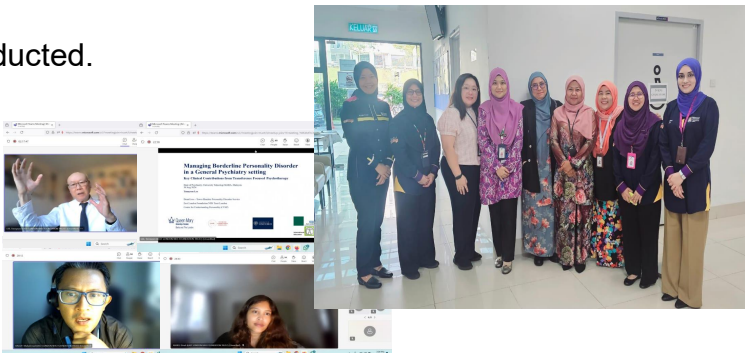
## AIM

- The aim of the study was to evaluate the effectiveness of a brief teaching programme on TFP as applied to patients with personality disorders, on improving the attitude and technical confidence of psychiatric trainees in one of the major universities in Malaysia, UiTM.

## METHOD

- Psychiatric trainees at UiTM received four 2-hour teaching sessions on applied TFP over consecutive weeks via video teleconference.
- Nineteen trainees completed 2 questionnaires, pre and post the teaching.
- The questionnaires used are both validated instruments with good psychometric properties:
  - Attitude to Personality Disorder Questionnaire (APDQ)
  - Clinical Confidence with Personality Disorder Questionnaire (CCPDQ)
- A one-hour focus group discussion was conducted 3 months after completion of the first session on applied TFP.
- The focus group consists of 8 participants who attended the applied TFP sessions.
- A thematic analysis was conducted.

The intercontinental study between UiTM (Malaysia) and Dean Cross Personality Disorder Service, ELFT (UK)



## RESULTS

### DEMOGRAPHICS

- 19 trainees participated. The mean age of participants was 33.18 years, with an average of 2 to 8 years of experience in psychiatry.

GENDER	
Male	3
Female	16
AGE	
25-34	12
35-44	7
YEARS IN PSYCHIATRY	
<2	2
2-4	9
4-6	6
6-8	2
TRAINING LEVEL	
1 <sup>st</sup> Year Trainee	7
2 <sup>nd</sup> Year Trainee	3
3 <sup>rd</sup> Year Trainee	7
Final Year Trainee	2

### APDQ

- The mean pre-intervention score was **71.11 ± 9.87 (range: 49-87)**
- The mean post-intervention score was **65.05 ± 10.79 (range: 49-87)**
- Result showed a statistically significant reduction (**t(18) = 4.11, p=0.00065**)
- This finding indicates improved attitudes toward patients with personality disorders.

### CCPDQ

- The mean pre-intervention score was **16.11 ± 6.38 (range: 1-28)**
- The mean post-intervention score was **22.58 ± 7.76 (range: 0-36)**
- Result showed a statistically significant increment (**t(18) = -3.58, p=0.0021**)
- This finding indicates a significant increase in confidence levels

## THEMATIC ANALYSIS

- From the thematic analysis of the focus group discussion, 4 main themes were constructed with several subthemes each.

**Theme 1:** Understanding and using countertransference with patients with personality disorder.

- Participants described increased awareness of countertransference; and the positive and negative effects of countertransference on patient care.

**Theme 2:** The treatment frame, and the clinician's role in boundary setting.

- Participants described increased ability to set boundaries with patients with personality disorder.

**Theme 3:** Shifting attitudes and clinical confidence.

- Participants noticed a change in countertransference which led to change in attitudes.
- Participants described clinical confidence and application of TFP techniques.

**Theme 4:** Clinical complexity and learning.

- It reflects the clinical complexity and unpredictability in managing patients with personality disorder and the challenges implementing TFP in everyday clinical practice which led to the desire for more practical learning to build confidence.

## CONCLUSIONS

- A brief programme of teaching sessions on applied TFP to personality disorders can significantly improve psychiatric trainees' attitudes and confidence in clinical encounters with patients with personality disorders.
- Given the low resource requirements (8 hours of training, delivered remotely), and the growing international experience of effective teaching of applied TFP training, it may be considered not only in Malaysia but in a range of countries.

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