
Abstract

A preliminary study on the practice of panic-focused psychodynamic psychotherapy in Japan

SUZUKI, Namiko

Department of Psychology, Faculty of Letters, Komazawa University

SAKAI, Toshiyuki

Department of Psychiatry, Tokyo Medical University Hospital

SUZUKI, Takao

Department of Clinical Psychology, National Center Hospital, National Center of Neurology and Psychiatry

FUKUSHIMA, Wataru

West Shinjuku Office of Counseling and Psychotherapy

KANESHIRO, Kenji

Faculty of Clinical Psychology, Taisho University

There has been much criticism of the lack of empirical evidence in psychoanalytic psychotherapy. However, panic-focused psychodynamic psychotherapy (PFPP), a manualized psychoanalytic psychotherapy, was developed and reported to be empirically effective for panic disorders and as effective as other psychotherapies. We conducted this PFPP in Japan and examined its outcomes. The PFPP was conducted as a structured, time-limited psychotherapy program consisting of 24 sessions, twice weekly, in three phases. Participants were exclusively recruited from among those with primary DSM-IV panic disorder and were offered a free program conducted by psychodynamic psychotherapists with more than 10 years' experience. In this study, we report the outcomes and processes of three cases. Patients completing panic-focused psychotherapy often experience a meaningful remission of anxiety symptoms and psychosocial functional impairment. As a treatment technique, exploring the meaning of symptoms and reconstructing life history may result in subsequent improvements. Based on these findings, we believe that brief dynamic psychotherapy can be an alternative treatment for panic disorder. Further outcome research on psychoanalytic treatments is warranted to elaborate on these results.

Keywords: panic focused psychodynamic psychotherapy, panic disorder, psychoanalytic psychotherapy
