

The Role of Intrapsychic Imbalance in the Development, Maintenance, and Treatment of Addictive Disorders



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SUMMARY: *The behaviour of patients dependent on addictive substances, their destructiveness and self-destructiveness, raises concerns in all the people who come into contact with them, including those who are there to treat them. Therapists find themselves in (perceived) situations when they become convinced that patients must be prevented from engaging in certain behaviours, but they would have to be omnipotent to achieve this.*

At moments when a dependent patient does not show destructive behaviour and – perceived from the outside – a certain process develops within the therapeutic relationship, the therapist may become overwhelmed by a sense of uselessness associated with counter-transference. He/she feels that the patient is more or less successfully controlling his/her internal balance without the use of drugs, while the therapist is involved in this only little, rather as a witness, or not at all.

The case study is referred to here in order to illustrate how this apparent irrelation on the part of drug-dependent patients may be used in psychotherapy.

KEY WORDS: TRANSFERENCE – NARCISSISTIC CRISIS – PROJECTIVE IDENTIFICATION

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