

ATTACHMENT STYLES AND INTERPERSONAL PROBLEMS IN PATIENTS WITH CONVERSION DISORDER

Ayesha Yasin

MS Clinical Psychology

Riphah Institute of Clinical & Professional
Psychology Riphah International University,
Lahore

PAKISTAN

ayesha.yaseen07@gmail.com

Ms. Rakia Ashraf

Lecturer

Riphah Institute of Clinical & Professional
Psychology Riphah International University,
Lahore

PAKISTAN

rakiaashraf@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The present study investigated the relationship between Attachment Styles and Interpersonal Problems. The study was conducted on 200 patients with Conversion Disorder taken from the different hospitals of Lahore through Purposive sampling. The results of the study showed that relationship of Dependent and Anxious Attachment Styles with Interpersonal Problems is significantly positive. While Close Attachment Styles and Interpersonal Problems have a significant negative relationship. The results also indicated that Attachment Styles predicts different domains of Interpersonal Problems The study will help the mental health practitioners to counsel patients regarding Attachment Styles and their impact on the relationships in order to avoid Interpersonal Problems.

Keywords: Attachment Styles, Interpersonal Problems, Conversion Disorder.

INTRODUCTION

As guardians parents are the one who nurture and raise a child. Parents influence the child's especially the relationships they develop with people around them. The ways parents behave and form interpersonal relationship is deeply connected to different mental health problems (Halgin, & whitbourne, 2007). From birth individuals are engage in interactions with other people around them. These interpersonal interactions between different people have a cognitive and emotional representation in our nervous system as schema. These schemas guide the individuals and influence their perceptions, feelings and emotion regarding their friends, family and other people around them. When something happens against our schemas Interpersonal Problems rises (Horowitz, Alden, Wiggin & Pincus, 2000). Individual's social relationships are connected to their psychological well being and mental health. When the relationships get stressful and dissatisfying it can lead to psychopathology. Interpersonal Problems can occur due to lack of effective communication or just having problematic relationships with the people (Sergin, 2001). Interpersonal problems are the key to examining any kind of psychopathology (Sroufe, Duggal, Weinfield & Carlson, 2000).

Environmental and some psychosocial factors like parents attitude towards the child, stressful situations or dysfunctional family environment can be the cause of functional symptoms (Repetti, Taylor & Seeman, 2002). Social relationships play an important role in maintaining the troubled behavior (Sroufe et al., 2000).

Difficulties in different relationships with people around one which causes distress are Interpersonal Problems. Horowitz (1988) analyze different Interpersonal Problems i.e. difficulties in being assertive, sociable, submissive, intimate, responsible, and being controlling.

TYPES OF INTERPERSONAL PROBLEMS

Horowitz (2004) describe following types of Interpersonal Problems as Domineering or Controlling type in which people have problem in controlling and manipulating others. These people have problem withstanding other person's dominating behavior or giving them instructions. People with this type of problem have difficulty understanding others point of view and end up arguing with others to prove themselves right. Vindictive or Self Centered problem makes people irritable and aggressive. People with this type of problem become preoccupied with revenge. The problem leads the individuals towards hostile dominance and results in lack of trust and makes people suspects others intentions (Horowitz, 2004).

Cold or Distant problems makes people least affectionate and less connected towards people around them. Due to this problem of being cold or distant maintaining long term relationships became difficult for these individuals as they began to care less about their partners. These problems lead the individuals towards lack of empathy, warmth and generosity. Interpersonal problems related to Socially Inhibited behavior make it difficult for the individual to socialize with other people and feel confident. The individuals with this problem experience anxiety and embarrassment when they are around people, and to avoid rejection and criticism they avoid social gatherings and have limited social activities (Horowitz, 2004).

Non Assertive problems in interpersonal relationships leads the individuals towards lack of self-confidence, low self esteem and non assertive towards other people. Individuals with this type of Interpersonal Problems become unassertive and they tend to self-doubt themselves. They avoid being the center of attention. They find it hard to take initiatives and avoid social exchanges that involve display of power over people. Overly accommodating Interpersonal Problem leads people to avoid being assertive around other people in order to influence them. This leads those individuals to try to please everyone and want everyone's approval. Due to this type of problem these individuals become more gullible, gentle, obliging and accommodating. But they tend to acknowledge their mistakes and avoid being in an argument (Horowitz, 2004).

Self sacrificing Interpersonal Problem makes individuals empathic, warm and generous. They connect with people easily and nurture others when they are in need. They scarify their own needs for the needs of other people. These socially desirable characteristics become problematic for them as it is hard for these individuals to set boundaries for people around them. Needy or Intrusive Interpersonal Problem makes individuals controlling and sociable to an extent that they meddles in other people affairs and offend others easily. They have a strong urge to be around people and impose themselves on them. They find it hard to spend time alone (Horowitz, 2004).

ATTACHMENT STYLES

Attachment refers to a lasting bond between certain people of immense intensity (Bartholomew, 1990). It is the foremost relationship which allows individuals to learn how to organize meaning (Marris, 1991). Needs, expectations, emotions, strategies to regulate emotions and social

behavior are some systematic patterns that result from an innate attachment behavior called Attachment Styles (Fraley, 1989). A close emotional relationship between two individuals with shared affection and the desire to maintain closeness is known as Attachment (Shaffer, 1993). The relationship an individual had with his or her early caregiver influences how the individual will interact with others. The relationship individual had with his or her caregiver become internalized and later influences how the individual perceives the self and new relationships later in life. The attachment behavior apparent in the early childhood is likely to be manifested throughout the life (Bowlby, 1973).

Hazan and Shaver's (1987) view of adult attachment is same as characterized by the child-caregiver attachment bonds described by Ainsworth. Secure, avoidant and anxious ambivalent i.e. the three-category model of adult romantic relationships was proposed by Hazan and Shaver (1987). Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991) proposed the way Attachment Styles used to clarify a person's motives in interpersonal relationships and how the different Attachment Styles correspond to different interpersonal types (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991).

Adult Attachment Styles are classified in the similar way the children Attachment Styles had categorized (Ainsworth, 1989), consisting of two dimensions i.e. anxiety and avoidance which regulate the fear of rejection and abandonment within close relationships and discomfort with intimacy and tendency to seek independence respectively. Due to synergy of the two dimensions, Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991) classified Attachment Styles in different types.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Anxious and Avoidant Attachment Styles were associated with Interpersonal Problems and certain Interpersonal Problems mediates the relations between Attachment Style and types of different behaviors related to suicide (Stepp et al., 2008). Besharat and Shahidi (2013) found that there is a significant negative correlation between secure Attachment Style and Interpersonal Problems. Moreover Interpersonal Problems had a significant positive correlation with avoidant and ambivalent Attachment Styles. Interpersonal Problems and both anxiety related to attachment and avoidance related to attachment have significant positive relationship. There was significant negative association between secure attachment and six subscales of Interpersonal Problems i.e. dominant, vindictive, cold, and socially inhibited and non-assertive. And a significant positive association between fearful attachment and six subscales of Interpersonal Problems i.e. dominant, vindictive, cold, socially inhibited and non-assertive (Haggerty, Hilsenroth, & Stewart, 2009).

Rationale

The current research has explored the role of Attachment Styles on different domain of Interpersonal Problems. It was important to examine the issue since some studies illustrated the link between Attachment Styles in adults and its influence on Interpersonal Problems (Besharat, Golinejad, & Ahmadi, 2003). The study will also help to understand how Attachment Styles influence the relationship between Attachment Styles and Interpersonal Problems. Understanding the importance of different Attachments especially in individuals with Conversion Disorder helps to understand the different types of Interpersonal Problems that are caused by those Attachments.

Objectives

- To investigate the relationship between Attachment Styles and Interpersonal Problems in patients with Conversion Disorder.
- To study the predictive role of Attachment Styles on different domains of Interpersonal Problem in patients with Conversion Disorder.

Hypotheses

- Different Attachment Styles i.e. Close, Anxious and Depend Attachment styles are likely to correlate with different domains of Interpersonal Problems.
- Different Attachment Styles i.e. Close, Anxious and Depend Attachment styles are likely to predict different domains of Interpersonal Problems.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

Co-relational research design was used to investigate the relationship between Attachment Styles and Interpersonal Problems in Patients with Conversion Disorder. Purposive sampling was done.

Sample

The sample consisted of 200 male and female patients with Conversion Disorder. The sample size was determined by G-Power Analysis.

Sampling Technique

Measures

Assessment measure includes the following.

Demographic Information

A list of different questions like name, age, sex, education, marital status, and relationship with siblings, parents and spouse, monthly income of family or participants, residence, socio economic status, number of siblings, education of parents, and family system was given to the participants to collect information.

Adult Attachment Scale

Adult Attachment Scale (AAS; Collin & Reed, 1990) was used to measure Attachment Styles of the participants. AAS consist of three sub-scales that measures three different types of Attachment Styles i.e. Close, Dependant and Anxious. The scale consists of 18 items.

Inventory of Interpersonal Problems-32

Inventory of Interpersonal Problems was developed identifying different kind of difficulties experienced by people in their interpersonal relationships.

Procedure

The participants were approached at outdoor units of different hospitals. Each participant was provided with the Information Sheet for detail information regarding the research and a Consent Form to make sure that the participants were willingly participating in the research. They were informed about the ethical consideration of the study. After that pilot study and main study was conducted.

Results

Data was analyzed using Statistical Packages for Social Science (SPSS.21).

Table 1
Correlation between Study Variables among Conversion Patients (N=200)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	
1. CAS	1	.52**	-.27**	-.23**	-.20**	-.25**	-.22**	-.13	.01	-.14*	-.24**	-.27**	.01	.17*	.13	.02	-.05	-.12	.07	
2. DAS		1	-.41**	-.20**	-.18**	-.32**	-.21**	-.17*	-.07	-.27**	-.32**	-.33**	-.02	.16*	.14*	.03	-.05	-.15*	.01	
3. AAS			1	.30**	.22**	.13	.20**	.28**	.18**	.31**	.32**	.36**	.10	-.04	-.00	.17*	-.14*	.13	-.04	
4. Hard-Assertive				1	.72**	.30**	.58**	.28**	.10	.26**	.41**	.70**	.04	-.03	-.01	.03	-.06	.10	-.13*	
5. Hard-Sociable					1	.33**	.55**	.24**	.13	.24**	.40**	.69**	.02	-.08	-.04	.11	-.07	.10	-.19**	
6. Hard-Supportive						1	.54**	.31**	.07	.34**	.55**	.67**	.02	-.21**	-.21**	-.05	.14*	.13	-.14*	
7. Hard-Involved							1	.29**	.07	.24**	.52**	.73**	.02	-.10	-.07	.03	.04	.15*	-.06	
8. Too-Caring								1	.51**	.45**	.49**	.65**	.10	-.05	.01	.05	-.03	-.05	-.08	
9. Too-Dependent									1	.41**	.36**	.47**	.18**	-.03	.03	.16*	-.19**	-.04	-.06	
10. Too-Aggressive										1	.45**	.62**	.11	-.18**	-.10	.02	.04	.00	-.10	
11. Too-Open											1	.78**	.08	-.18**	-.14*	.02	.06	.06	-.17*	
12. IP												1	.11	-.17*	-.11	.06	-.006	.09	-.18**	
13. Gender													1	.12	.21**	.27**	-.27**	-.24**	.01	
14. Siblings														1	.71**	.09	-.15*	.00	-.07	
15. Sister															1	.16*	-.18**	.00	-.00	
16. Marital status																1	-.73**	-.14*	-.07	
17. R/sh with spouse																	1	.15*	-.05	
18. R/sh with father																		1	-.09	
19. Financial situation																				1

*p < .05. **p < .01.

Note: CAS= Close Attachment Style, DAS = Dependent Attachment Style, AAS = Anxious Attachment Style, Hard- = hard to be, too = too much, R/sh= Relationship, IP = Interpersonal Problems

The results in above table shows that individuals having Close and Dependant Attachments with their parents or significant others are more assertive, sociable, and support of other peoples. They are also less aggressive and are more stable in expressing themselves. Individuals having Dependent Attachment Style are also more involved in the other individuals and are considerate towards problem of people around them. While individuals with Anxious Attachment Style find it difficult to be assertive when required, are associable and are less involved and are overly concerned about others, are aggressive, dependent on others and are too open in expressing their feelings.

Table 2*Table showing domain of Interpersonal Problems predicted by Attachment Styles*

Predictors	IP		Domains of Interpersonal Problems							
			Hard to be							
	ΔR^2	B	Assertive		Sociable		Supportive		Involved	
			ΔR^2	B	ΔR^2	β	ΔR^2	β	ΔR^2	β
Step 1	.04**		.008		.03*		.08***		.01	
Financial Situation		-.17**		-.14*		-.18**				
R/sh with Father		.07								.16*
Step 2	.21***		.09***		.07**		.04**		.59**	
CAS		.09		-.15*		-.10*		-.08		.13*
DAS		-.17*		-.01		-.05		-.22**		-.06
AAS		.006***		.24***		.13		.001		.11
Total R ²	.21***		.14***		.12		.18***		.10	

*p < .05. , **p < .01, ***p < 0.01

Note: CAS= Close Attachment Style, DAS = Dependent Attachment Style, AAS = Anxious Attachment Style, IP= Interpersonal Problems

The results shown in the above table indicates that Close Attachment Style predicts less difficulty in being assertive, social and supportive in relationships. Dependent Attachment Style predicts less difficulty in being supportive.

Table 3*Table showing domain of Interpersonal Problems predicted by Attachment Styles*

Predictors	Domains of Interpersonal problems							
	Too much							
	Caring		Dependent		Aggressive		Open	
	ΔR^2	β	ΔR^2	β	ΔR^2	β	ΔR^2	B
Step 1	.03		.37*		.03*		.06**	
Financial Situation		-.09		-.08		-.11		-.17***
R/sh with Father		-.04		-.17		.09		0.87
Step 2	.11***		.48		.13***		.17***	
CAS		-.06		.94		.04		-.05
DAS		-.03		-.05		-.17*		-.16*
AAS		.25***		.14**		.24***		.22**
Total R ²	.33***		.46		.41***		.46	

*p < .05. , **p < .01, ***p < 0.01

Note: CAS= Close Attachment Style, DAS = Dependent Attachment Style, AAS = Anxious Attachment Style

Dependent Attachment Style predicts less difficulty in being too much caring and open with others. Anxious Attachment Style predicts having difficulties in being assertive and being very aggressive, open and dependent on others.

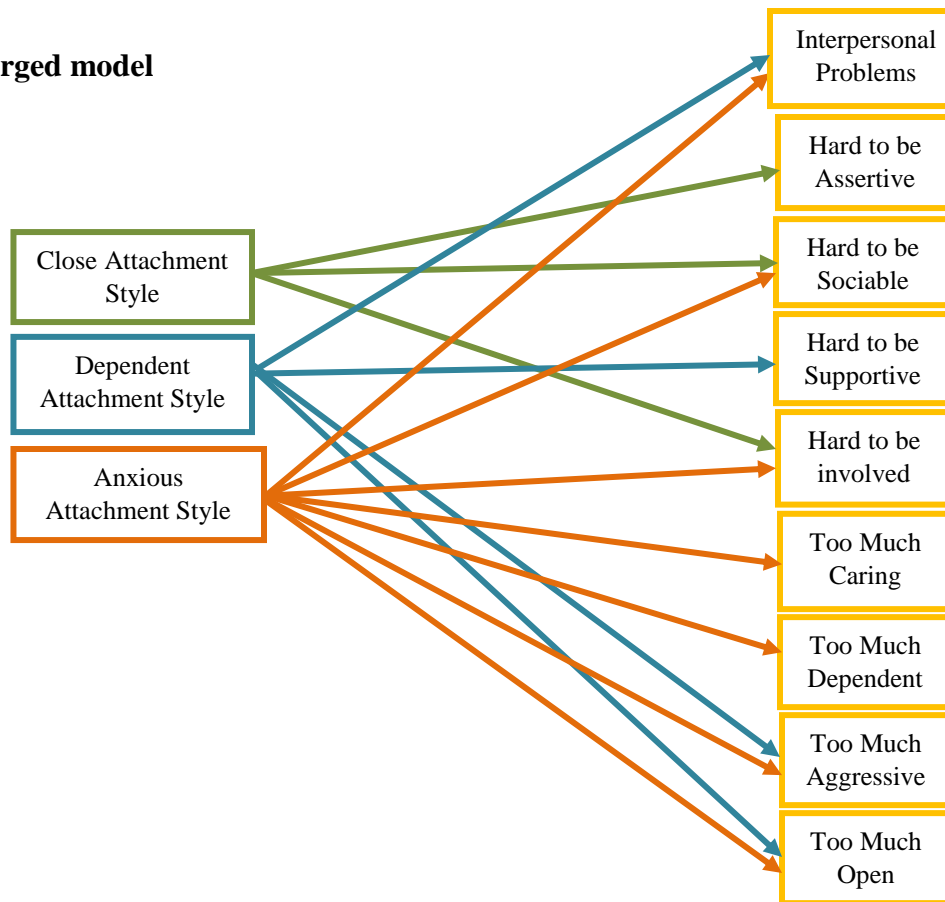
Emerged model

Figure 1 showing result of Regression Analysis in which Attachment Styles are predicting different domains of Interpersonal Problems

DISCUSSION

The current study showed that individuals having a Dependent Attachment Style and Close Attachment Style are less likely to have Interpersonal Problems in their relationships. Individuals with strong bonds and trusting relationship with their families and friends tend to have less Interpersonal Problems in their life. A study examined the relationship between Attachment Styles and Interpersonal Problems. It was found that there is a significant positive relation between Interpersonal Problems and both attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance. There was significant negative association between secure attachment and six subscales of Interpersonal Problems i.e. dominant, vindictive, cold, and socially inhibited and non-assertive. And a significant positive association between fearful attachment and six subscales of Interpersonal Problems i.e. dominant, vindictive, cold, socially inhibited and non-assertive (Haggerty, Hilsenroth, & Stewart, 2009). The current study also showed that individuals with Anxious Attachment Style have a significant positive relationship with Interpersonal Problems. The more insecure is the relationship the more are the Interpersonal Problems. Previous researches showed that Attachment and Interpersonal Problems can increase the risk for suicidal behaviors. Finding of another research also support the study findings as its results showed that Secure Attachment Style and Interpersonal Problems were significantly negatively correlated (Besharat & Shahidi, 2013). Anxious Attachment Styles was associated with Interpersonal

Problems and specific Interpersonal Problems (Stepp et al., 2008). The results of a previous study also showed that Interpersonal Problems, avoidant and ambivalent Attachment Style had a significant positive correlation (Besharat & Shahidi, 2013).

CONCLUSION

It is evident from the current research and previous researches that individuals with secure patterns of attachment have less Interpersonal Problems their relationships with the people around them as compare to individuals with insecure Attachments.

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