Effectiveness of Psychotherapy in Adult ADHD: What Do Patients Think? Results of the COMPAS Study

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Abstract

Objective:
In the multicenter study Comparison of Methylphenidate and Psychotherapy in Adult ADHD (COMPAS), the efficacy of treatments has been primarily evaluated by observer-rated symptom change. Here, we additionally analyzed the patients’ subjective evaluation of therapy effects.

Method:
COMPAS compared ADHD-specific group therapy with unspecific clinical management with/without concomitant pharmacotherapy in a four-armed design. Evaluation through the patients’ retrospective perspective was performed after 1 year (post-treatment) and after another 1.5 years (follow-up).

Results:
In respect to patients’ subjective ratings, ADHD-specific group psychotherapy outperformed unspecific management post-treatment ($z = 4.88$, $p < .0001$) and at follow-up ($z = 2.90$, $p = .004$). Rank correlations with rater-based symptom change were small to moderate (post-treatment: $rs = 0.28$, follow-up: $rs = 0.16$).

Conclusion:
Therapy evaluation based on the patients’ perspective supports the concept of ADHD-specific group psychotherapy as a potentially useful therapy option in ADHD.