

Mental splitting and sexual dysfunctions in young obese women

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INTRODUCTION

Recent research has indicated that obese women have an enhanced propensity to experience a variety of mental health problems^{1,2,3,4,5,6} and clinical data shows that sexual dysfunctions and disturbed intimate relationships have a high prevalence in obese women^{7,8,9,10,11,12}.

The process of splitting mainly reflects instability in personal relationships and vulnerability which determines “black-white shifts of mind” between acceptance and rejection of another person^{13,14,15}. The process of splitting is also associated with conflicting acute or long lasting stressful experiences influencing sensitivity and vulnerability and also significantly contribute to disturbances of memory, identity and consciousness usually related also to dissociative experiences^{13,14,15,16,17,18}.

The purpose of the current research is examination of a hypothesis that process of splitting will be linked to the difficulties in sexual behavior.



METHODS

The current study included subjects of 71 obese young women (BMI \geq 30), recruited from the consecutive outpatients treated at the Hospital Homolka. Age range 18-38, predominantly with high school education.

The participants were evaluated by Eating Disorder Examination Questionnaire (EDE-Q), Splitting index inventory (SI) and Sexuality and Sexual Behavior Questionnaire.

Statistical evaluations of psychometric data included means, standard deviations, the Mann-Whitney test and Spearman correlation coefficients.

RESULTS

The results identify significant Spearman correlations of splitting (SI) and sexual dysfunction dyspareunia related to painful feelings during sexual intercourse (R=0.39, p<0.01).

CONCLUSIONS

Novel findings of this study indicate that sexual dysfunctions in young obese women are correlated with emotional and cognitive disturbances associated with splitting. These findings suggest that painful symptoms during sexual intercourse in young obese women may not have somatic origin and might reflect disturbed relationship between partners which may be linked to conflicting mental patterns.

These research results might have substantive implications for psychotherapy of obese women and further may assist to identify and understand the basic psychopathological factors in the pathogenesis of obesity and its relationship to “self-acceptance” in its relationship to splitting representing acceptance or rejection in minds of others.

	Mean	SD
Age	30.39	5.57
BMI	38.53	7.51

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