

A Study on the Use of FAP Therapy in Trauma Treatment for Complex PTSD (DSO)

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INTRODUCTION

Complex PTSD has been reported to be more difficult to treat than PTSD (Alexandra Howard et al., 2021).

Complex PTSD presents problems in the three domains of disturbances in self-organization (DSO): affect dysregulation, negative self-concept, and disturbances in relationships, in addition to the three indicators of PTSD. The key to success in treating complex PTSD is how to address DSO effectively, and further study is necessary in this area.

In Japan, FAP therapy has been practiced as an effective treatment for complex PTSD. Developed by Ohshima in 2001, this therapy is effective in treating various problems including Complex PTSD symptoms (Ohshima 2001; Kudo 2003; Ohtsuka 2018, 2019, 2020).

In this study, to assess the effectiveness of FAP therapy against DSO, 12 patients with a history of childhood abuse were asked to answer the ITQ (complex PTSD) and the BDI (depression) before and after treatment.

METHODS

● **Subjects 12** (with a history of childhood abuse)

【Diagnosis】

- Complex PTSD (6)
- PTSD (0)
- No PTSD/Complex PTSD (6)

● Measures

- ① International Trauma Questionnaire (ITQ) **Complex PTSD** • **PTSD**
- ② Beck Depression Inventory - Second Edition (BDI-II) **Depression**

● Data analysis

- ① Difference between pre- and post-treatment ITQ scores
- ② Difference between pre- and post-treatment BDI scores
- ③ Mean number of interviews

RESULTS

① Difference between mean pre- and post-treatment ITQ scores for DSO and PTSD

- **DSO: Pre-interview (14) ⇒ Post-interview (7)**
- **PTSD : Pre-interview (11) ⇒ Post-interview (5)**

• **Complex PTSD : Pre-interview(6) ⇒ Post-interview (1)**

※ **Following intervention with FAP therapy, 5 of the 6 patients formerly diagnosed with complex PTSD did not fulfill the criteria for a diagnosis of PTSD or Complex PTSD.**

② Difference between mean pre- and post-treatment BDI scores

- **Critical Values (14)**
- **BDI : Pre-interview (19) ⇒ Post-interview (6)**

※ **Following intervention with FAP therapy, BDI scores decreased to 6, which was below the threshold level (14) and was within the normal range of mood fluctuation.**

③ Mean number of interviews

- **6**

DISCUSSION

The therapeutic efficacy of FAP therapy against complex PTSD was assessed in 12 patients with a history of childhood abuse. Following short-term intervention using 6 sessions on average, 5 of the 6 cases with an established diagnosis of complex PTSD did not fulfill the criteria for a diagnosis of PTSD or Complex PTSD.

Assessment of depression using BDI-II also showed improvement to the normal range below the threshold level. FAP therapy was found to be effective in treating the symptoms of complex PTSD, especially the three domains of DSO, and depression in a short treatment period.

Following intervention with FAP therapy, 5 of the 6 patients formerly diagnosed with complex PTSD lost their diagnosis.

【Breakdown of cases】

12 Participants

Mean number of interviews: 6

Diagnosis	Pre-interview	Post-interview
Complex PTSD	6	1
PTSD	0	0
None	6	11

【Mean Scores of DSO and PTSD】

	Pre-interview	Post-interview
DSO	14	7
PTSD	11	5

Following intervention with FAP therapy, BDI scores decreased to 6, which was below the threshold level (14) and was within the normal range of mood fluctuation.

【BDI】 Threshold Values 14

	Pre-interview	Post-interview
Depression	19	6

FAP therapy was found to be effective in treating the symptoms of complex PTSD, especially the three domains of DSO, and depression in a short treatment period.

* Characteristics of FAP

1. Lack of distress
2. Short treatment period
3. Long-lasting effectiveness
4. Integration of traumatic memories/emotion and improved dissociation

* Benefits of FAP

1. Safe
2. Effective in a short period
3. Outcome not dependent on skill level of therapist
4. Ability to treat traumatic amnesia

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