

Outcomes of Psychodynamic Psychotherapy with Incorporated Mentalization-Focused Approaches for Children with ADHD and Mentalization Impairment

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Abstract

The purposes of our study are to investigate the efficacy of psychodynamic psychotherapy with incorporated mentalization-focused approaches for children with Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and mentalization impairment and to explore the relationship between mentalization capacity and children's ADHD. Our hypotheses are that the aforementioned psychotherapy can be effective for children suffering of ADHD and mentalization impairment and that there is a relationship between ADHD and the mentalization capacity. A sample of three children aged 6 - 9 years who are diagnosed with ADHD and mentalization impairment were engaged in a psychodynamic psychotherapy with incorporated mentalization-focused approaches for one year. We administered two identical Rorschach's tests, one before the beginning of the treatment and one after one year of the treatment. Results suggested that there is a progress concerning the ADHD and the mentalization impairment in those children and that there is a relationship between mentalization capacity and ADHD. Implications in treating the ADHD in comorbidity with mentalization impairment are discussed.

Keywords: Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder; Psychodynamic Psychotherapy; Mentalization-Focused Approaches; Mentalization Impairment; Rorschach's Test

Introduction

Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is a common psychiatric disorder and its main symptoms are inattention, impulsivity and/or hyperactivity [1]. The prevalence of ADHD in children is 5% in the USA according to the American Psychiatric Association [1].

At the beginning of the first decade of the 21st century, with a series of books and an article [2-4] on "mentalizing" and his corresponding noun "mentalization", Fonagy, Jurist, Gergely, Target, Allen and Bateman introduced those concepts in the Anglo-Saxon psychoanalytic literature and theories.

Beside the fact that this term is semi-neologistic in English, it was common in France during the last quarter of the 20th century [5] given that this notion was firstly introduced by French psychoanalysts, mainly by Marty [6].

One definition of mentalization is "the mental process by which an individual implicitly and explicitly interprets the actions of himself and others as meaningful on the basis of intentional mental states such as personal desires, needs, feelings, beliefs and reasons" [4].

Fonagy and Bateman created mentalization-based treatment, initially addressed to patients with borderline personality disorder. It was observed that those patients had also mentalization impairment [4].

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This article provides a study of the efficacy of a model of psychodynamic therapy with incorporated mentalization-focused approaches for children with ADHD and mentalization impairment. It has been proven that mentalization impairment can occur in comorbidity with a wide range of psychiatric disorders [7]. Consequently, psychological therapies, which adopted techniques and approaches from mentalization-based treatment, have been developed [8,9]. In this article we also examine the relationship between ADHD and mentalization capacity.

The psychodynamics of ADHD

Leuzinger-Bohleber, Canestri and Target claim that “ADHD is seen as a complex pattern of behavior due to multiple factors determined by different individual, biographical (psychodynamic) determinants” (2010). The authors pinpointed that factors as social conditions under which the child is brought up or prenatal factors, such as well as biological and genetic factors, are of primary importance. If this standpoint is adopted, therapeutic interventions will focus on the biographical and social factors from a psychodynamic perspective, in order to comprehend the personality structures that trigger ADHD symptoms [10].

Streeck Fischer [11] maintains that ADHD presents some singularities, such as affect regulation dysfunction, difficulty to tolerate conflictuality and pressure, mentalization impairment and relationship disorders.

According to Leuzinger-Bohleber [12] despite their differences in theory and concepts, most psychoanalytic authors concurred that disturbances in early affect regulation play an important role in the genesis of ADHD.

One of the pioneers of the psychoanalytic object relations theory, William R. D. Fairbairn, emphasizes that the emotional relationships with the parents and particularly the mother, at the stages following the early oral phase, determine the structure of personality [13]. In parallel, another pioneer of this theory, Melanie Klein, developed her concepts of paranoid-schizoid and depressive position [14,15], to describe the early oral phase and its relationships with the genesis of psychopathology. D. W. Winnicott also embraced object relations theory and is one of the establishers of this theoretical model. One of his concept is the concept of the “intermediate area” which is “the area that is allowed to the infant between primary creativity and objective perception based on reality testing” [16].

The object relations model and, most specifically, the Kleinian theoretical model are applied by Rainwater [17] in his psychodynamic understanding of ADHD. During his normal development, the child, according to Klein [14] works through from maniac to depressive states. To Klein [14] mania is characterized by the sense of omnipotence to control and master objects, by an excess of activity and by a denial of reality, of both, psychic and external. The hyperactivity allows to control the object and to avoid, at the same time, the pain of psychic reality. Rainwater argues that ADHD symptoms are the result of a manic defense against depressive anxiety because depressive anxiety can be terrifying and painful for the child.

According to Leuzinger-Bohleber and Fischmann [18] there are no clear limits between “normal” and “pathological” form of hyperactivity. The above authors introduced an object relation model based on Klein’s and Winnicott’s concepts. They argued that a secure relationship with a “meaningful Other” cannot be established. Consequently, according to Winnicott’s views, a “transitional space” (“intermediate area”, according to the terms of Winnicott of 1953) cannot be created and the symbolization and the creativity cannot be adequately developed. Leuzinger-Bohleber and Fischmann maintained that in the moments of the discharge of intense negative affects by the infant, a splitting occurs: relationships are distinguished in an idealized and in a persecuting part. They see ADHD symptoms as a result of anxieties of the paranoid-schizoid position: the infant projects his aggressive impulses onto “Other” and in that way he feels persecuted.

In 1962, Bion [19] introduced the theory of container and contained and describes for the first time the alpha function, which converts beta elements to alpha elements. Gunter [20] maintains that the complex set of symptoms of ADHD can be explained in terms of Bion’s theory [19,21,22]. According to Gunter, ADHD is a disorder in thinking and affect.

Mentalization and mentalization-based therapy

There are two concepts, mentalization and mentalizing, both are used to describe the same human capacity. The treatment based on those two notions is named “mentalization-based treatment”. Allen [3] maintains that because of the grammatical difference between a noun and a gerund, the content of those two concepts is similar but not interchangeable: mentalizing is a gerund, so by definition it derives from a verb and it is related to an action; in this occurrence a mental action [3]. This argument leads Allen [3,23] to use the word mentalizing and not the word mentalization and to persevere in his choice. In this article, only the term mentalization will be used and its meaning would be interchangeable with this of mentalizing, as defined by Allen [3].

In 2010, Fonagy defined mentalization as “a form of mostly preconscious imaginative mental activity, namely, interpreting people’s actions in terms of ‘intentional’ mental states” ([24], p. 55).

A developmental theory was advanced by Fonagy in an article of 1991 [25]. According to Freeman [26], Fonagy introduced in this article for the first time the “capacity to conceive of conscious and unconscious mental states in oneself and others as the capacity to mentalize” [25]. According to the model which Fonagy developed, when the capacity of mentalization emerges, the mechanisms of defense of the subject advance from primitive to more complex forms. Fonagy [25] explains, for the purpose of a reconciliation between the Kleinian model and his theoretical formulation, that a distinction is necessary. The author distinguishes the introjection which takes place prior to the acquisition of the mentalization, from the introjection which occurs when the mentalization is acquired and consequently the child internalizes his/her objects. When the child acquires mentalization, he internalizes his/her objects and at the same time internalizes or absorbs his/her states of mind, “not simply in terms of the products of their mental function, but also in terms of the processes which gave rise to them” [25].

The mentalization theoretical model was evolved by Fonagy and his collaborators who found a link between mentalization and Bowlby’s attachment theory [27]. In the view of Fonagy, Gergely, Jurist and Target [2] a sturdy mentalization is in a strong manner related to a secure attachment [2]. As mentioned by Allen and Fonagy, the kind of mentalization depends on the attachment context [23]. In parallel, an ambiance of secure attachment during the treatment promotes the therapy [23].

The mentalization-based therapy has some core features: the use of emotional closeness, the contrary moves and the intervention processes e.g. the challenge and the mentalization of the transference [28]. Even though the mentalization-based therapy has been created at first to treat borderline personality disorder, later it was used to treat a wider range of mental disorders [29] in 2018 a pilot study took place with the purpose to use the mentalization-based therapy to treat ADHD in adults [30]. The MBT-C, the application of mentalization-based therapy to the treatment of children, aimed at the treatment of a broad range of disorders [31,32].

The Study

Purpose and principal hypotheses

The main hypotheses of this study are two:

1. For children with ADHD and mentalization impairment, psychodynamic psychotherapy with incorporated mentalization-focused approaches could be effective.
2. There is a relation between ADHD and mentalization capacity.

Based on those hypotheses, the study conducted had the following purposes:

1. To evaluate the effectiveness of a psychodynamic psychotherapy with incorporated mentalization-focused approaches for children with ADHD and mentalization impairment.
2. To prove that ADHD and mentalization capacity are related.

Method

In our study, the children were engaged in psychotherapy which was based on psychodynamic psychotherapy in combination with the core approaches of the mentalization-based therapy. We used some basic interventions of the mentalization-based therapy [28,33]:

1. The therapist shows empathy with the patient's current state.
2. The therapist together with the patient explores and clarifies.
3. The therapist, if necessary, uses the challenge.

During the treatment sometimes it is necessary for the therapist to challenge the patient's non-mentalization. The goal of the challenge is the stimulation of mentalization. The notion of the challenge means that the therapist introduces something unexpected during the conversation.

4. The therapist identifies the affect and establishes affect focus.
5. In a session, the affect focus is the affect which is developed and is shared between the therapist and the patient. The therapist must identify it and express it. The mentalization of transference.

The mentalization of transference includes several steps: the confirmation of experience, the investigation in the current relationship, the approval and exploration of enactment, the collaboration in coming to an understanding, the discussion about an alternative perspective, the observation of the patient's reactions and the exploration of the patient's reactions to the new comprehension.

Measures

The Rorschach's test has been administered to the children with the intention of evaluating on the one hand the effectiveness and the efficacy of the psychotherapy and on the other hand the relation, if any, between mentalization capacity and ADHD. The study had two phases, the first phase at the beginning of the psychotherapy when the first Rorschach's test was administered and the second phase one year after the beginning of the psychotherapy when the second Rorschach's test was administered. We used the French School's scoring system.

Rorschach's test was chosen because it allows the establishment of a psychological diagnosis of personality. We interpreted this test from a psychodynamic standpoint in order to make hypotheses about the psychological processes and the psychodynamics of the subject. At the same time, we used this test as a tool to estimate the psychological function of mentalization. Consequently, Rorschach's test given in multiple phases is accurate for the evaluation of the outcomes of a psychological treatment, as it is a test which aims at grasping the dynamics of the whole personality [34] and Exner [35] pinpointed that Rorschach's test gives a personal picture of the subject.

Participants

The sample of this study are three (3) children aged 6 - 9 years who were diagnosed with Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder and also with mentalization impairment. The children came to our psychotherapy practice with a prior diagnosis of ADHD and mentalization impairment.

Results

Nikos's 1st rorschach's test protocol and interpretation

Nikos was 6 years and 10 months old.

Table 1: Nikos' 1st Rorschach's test protocol.

Card	Responses/Réponses		Inquiry/Enquête	Coding/Cotation			
I	1.	A mango. You know what it is?	It is here, this is it	D	F+	Bot/Alim	
	2.	A dangerous insect	It is here. You can see here its wings	G	F+	A	
	3.	An alien	It is a flying alien. It has two wings here and here is its body	G	F+	(H)	
II	4.	Did you make it? How did you make it? Is that a painting? It looks like a painting. It is a painting	It is all the card a painting	G	F+	Art	
	5.	He is someone, but it is not clear who he is	Here, his eyes and his cheeks	Dd	F-	Hd	
	6.	A gun and spots of blood	Here is the gun and around is the blood	Dd	FC	Obj/Blood/Sang	
III	7.	Ooh! I cannot see that. It is a monster (He laughs). Are you afraid?	You can see its eyes here, its nose, its mouth and its cheeks	G	F+	(Hd)	
	8.	A skeleton	It is here, the head and the body, all made of bones	D	F+	Anat	
IV	9.	A swordsman who is decapitated. He cannot move	You can see his body here	D	F+	Hd	
V	10.	An airplane	Here are its wings	G	F-	Obj	
	11.	A bat	Its wings are here and its head here	G	F+	A	BAN
	12.	A rabbit	It is here in the middle. You can see its ears, its body and its feet	Dd	F-	A	
VI	13.	A lake	Its shape is unusual, maybe. It's here	G	F-	Landscape	
	14.	An insect fights with a spider	This small thing at the top is the insect. And this one is the spider	G	kan	A	
VII	15.	Could I touch it? A painting which is not over yet	Whole card	G	F+	Art	
	16.	A muscular dog	Here, its head and its body	D	F-	A	
VIII	17.	Someone's heart	You can see it here	G	F-	Anat	
	18.	A fire. A tree is burning	The fire is here. Below is the tree	G	KBot	Bot	
IX	19.	Sheep eat on a farm	You can see here the sheep. And the entrance of the farm	G	F-	A/Archit	
X	20.	The last one! The last one! The lungs of someone	You can see here the lungs	D	F-	Anat	

Table 2: Psychogram of Nikos 1st Rorschach's test.

R = 20	G: 12	F 16	A 5	F%: 80%
	D:5	kan 2	Hd 2	F+% = 56.25%
		KBot 1	(H) 1	
	Dd:3	FC 1	(Hd) 1	A% = 25%
			Bot 1	(Hd)% = 10%
			Obj 1	H% = 5%
			Obj/Blood/Sang 1	(Hd)% = 5%
			Art 2	Bot% = 5%
			Anat 3	Obj% = 5%
			Landscape 1	Obj/Blood/Sang% = 5%
			A/Archit 1	Art% = 10%
			Bot/Alim 1	Anat% = 15%
				Landscape% = 5%
				A/Archit% = 5%
				Bot/Alim% = 5%
				BAN 1
T. Appr. G D Dd TRI: 0 K / 1 Σ C F. Compl. 2k / 0 Σ E choice +: VIII RC %: 20% choice -: III				

Nikos, during the Rorschach's test could not stay still. He squirmed on the seat and when he saw card III, he stood up. These reactions are symptoms of ADHD.

Nikos turned many times the cards to many directions, but finally in the responses he gave he took into consideration the correct direction of the cards. He asked questions to us in search of a frame and of a containment. In parallel, in that manner, he did not pay any more attention to the task which he had to accomplish. It was a sign of impairment in attentional control, symptom of ADHD, but also a sign of mentalization impairment, as long as attentional control antedates mentalization [7]. The laugh in answer 7 could be considered an anti-phobic defensive reaction to his anxieties.

Nikos gave three anatomic responses. This fact could show that he lacked a clear image of his body. This idea is strengthened by the presence of an alien and a monster. This is actually an impairment because probably Nikos did not have a clear idea of the limits of his body, of his interiority/exteriority and of his sensoriality.

This protocol showed a psychic instability and consequently a difficulty in affect regulation. Nikos' mood changed quickly; the tonality of his responses changed also quickly. There was a perpetual alternation between answers which represented a containing object or an object of identification e.g. "A mango..." or "A muscular dog" and answers close to paranoid-schizoid position e.g. "A gun and spots of blood (sang)" or "Fire. A tree is burning". Moreover, it is important that Nikos could access the depressive position. We noticed that every time a card aroused a paranoid-schizoid anxiety to him, a defense came against it and the next answer included a containing object e.g. "A rabbit" or a neutral object e.g. "An airplane". Nikos seemed to need a containment and the answer "A lake" may symbolize the need for a huge and powerful maternal object and for the return to the fetus state, because often his paranoid-schizoid anxieties and fears are overwhelming e.g. "Ooh! I cannot see that. It is a monster. (He laughs.) Are you afraid?"

There were not any human persons in this protocol, except a face of bad form in answer 5. This absence probably indicated a problematic identification with others or a problematic conception of the gender identity which led to a permanent use of animals in the answers. This assumption can be confirmed by the answer “A muscular dog”. This answer made us think of a muscular man, but Nikos possibly was not ready to give a human gender identity and he spoke about a dog. In this context, the mind goes automatically to a man. It looked as if because of those problems of identification and conception of gender identity Nikos probably faced socialization problems. Interpersonal understanding was difficult for him. These elements are typical of mentalization impairment [36].

Nikos’ 2nd rorschach’s test protocol and interpretation

Nikos was 7 years and 10 months old.

Table 3: Nikos’ 2nd Rorschach’s test protocol.

Card	Responses/ Réponses		Inquiry/Enquête	Coding/Cotation			
I	1.	An eagle	You can see its wings	G	F+	A	BAN
	2.	Two black birds	They are two heads here	Dd	FC	A	
	3.	Two wolves who are trapped	Here are their heads and their bodies. They are tied	G	F+	A	
II	4.	A spacecraft	This is the spacecraft	G	F-	Obj	
	5.	A couple who is dancing	Their heads are here, their hands and their bodies	G	K	H	
III	6.	Wild dogs that eat meat	There are two dogs here and here is the meat	D	kan	A	
	7.	A butterfly	This is the butterfly, just in the middle of the image	D	F+	A	
IV	8.	An elephant	You see its body? It is here. And its feet and its eyes	G	F+	A	BAN
	9.	Two big feet	They are here. They are really big	D	F+	Hd	
	10.	A man with three huge feet	Here you can see the three feet and the body. We cannot see the head	G	F-	(Hd)	
V	11.	A bird	It is a bird. Its wings are here	G	F+	A	BAN
	12.	A rabbit with wings	The body and the ears are here and the wings are here	G	F+	(A)	
VI	13.	An alien with a small head, without eyes	This is the small head and this is the body	G	F+	(H)	
VII	14.	Two boys who play	You can see here the boys	G	K	H	
VIII	15.	Two monkeys	One on the left and one on the right	D	F+	A	
	16.	A big mountain	It has its top here	G	F-	Landscape	
IX	17.	A fire in the forest	The fire is at the bottom, here. The forest is around	G	KLandscape	Landscape	
X	18.	A clown. His eyes, his nose, his mouth	His eyes are here, this one is his nose and this one his mouth	Dd	F-	Hd	
	19.	A pink tower	It is here	Dd	F+	Obj	

Table 4: Psychogram of Nikos' 2nd Rorschach's test.

R = 19	G: 12	F 14	A 8	F% = 73.68%
	D: 4	K 2	(A) 1	F+% = 71.42%
		kan 1	H 2	
	Dd: 3	KLandscape 1	Hd 2	A% = 42.1%
		FC 1	(H) 1	(A)% = 5.26%
			(Hd) 1	H% = 10.52%
			Obj 2	Hd% = 10.52%
			Landscape 2	(H)% = 5.26%
				(Hd)% = 5.26%
				Obj% = 10.52%
				Landscape% = 10.52%
				BAN 3
T. Appr. G D Dd TRI: 2K / 1 Σ C F. Compl. 2k / 0 Σ E choice +: VII RC %: 26.31 % choice -: I				

Nikos' answers in this second Rorschach's test showed an evolution. First of all, he could stay calmer during the test, rarely moving his feet. He did not ask us any question about the content of the cards.

There were no anatomic answers, but there were answers about an alien, a man with three feet, an answer of a deformed human face and finally the answer "Two big feet". Despite those answers there was an evolution in Nikos' conception of his body image and limits compared to the first test.

There are only four answers (2, 3, 6 and 13), related to persecutory anxieties and the paranoid-schizoid position. More specifically, the wolves, the persecutory object in response 3, are trapped. Before giving response 6, Nikos contemplated the card for a long time. Finally, Nikos responded "Wild dogs that eat meat". He expressed his fears and his anxieties through an elaborated answer with good form. It is a sign of affect regulation and of symbolization. Nikos felt secure to experience mental exploration, showed contemplation and reflection and all these elements are evidence of good mentalization.

Compared to the first Rorschach's test, there are many responses referring to human beings (5, 10, 14, 18). It is a major difference between the two tests. We hypothesized that at that moment the identification to the others was easier for Nikos. Probably the interpersonal understanding and the socialization of Nikos has made progress. Additionally, the answer "A couple who is dancing" showed that it was not difficult anymore for Nikos to accept his gender identity.

Dimitris's 1st rorschach's test protocol and interpretation

Dimitris was 7 years and 1 month old.

Table 5: Dimitris 1st Rorschach's test protocol.

Card	Responses/ Réponses	Inquiry/Enquête	Coding/Cotation			
I	1. A bat	Whole card	G	F+	A	BAN
	2. A chicken with wings which flies	Here are the wings and here is its body	G	kan	A	
	3. A monster with four eyes	Its body is here and the holes are its eyes	G	F+	(A)	
II	4. Blood. A bear is injured	The red here is the blood. Here is the body of the bear	D	CF	Blood/Sang/A	
	5. A face. Two eyes, the nose, the beard. I am sure, this is a face	The eyes are here, and here is the nose and the beard	Dd	F-	Hd	
III	6. Two wild dogs that are fighting and are injured. There is blood all around	The wild dogs are here. They are skinny. The blood is the red all around	G	KanC	A/Blood/Sang	
IV	7. A ghost with a black mask	His body is here. The mask is very small, it is here	D	FC	(H)	
V	8. An ant with wings	Its body is here and the wings are here	G	F+	(A)	
	9. A baby-bird which is weird	Its wings are here	G	F+	A	
VI	10. A wolf is screaming	It has a small strange head here. And its body is here	G	kan	A	
	11. A shirt	The shirt is here	Dd	F-	Obj	
	12. A huge insect	It has its head here and his body here	G	F+	A	
VII	13. A hedgehog	It is here	G	F-	A	
	14. Two little persons	They are here	G	F+	H	
VIII	15. A man who climbs a tree	Here, on the left, there is the man and here is the tree	D	KLandscape	H/Landscape	
	16. A skeleton	Here, at the bottom of the image	Dd	F-	Anat	
IX	17. Two heads of monsters	You can see the two heads, their noses and their eyes	D	F+	(Hd)	
X	18. The head of a cat	At the top, here	Dd	F-	Ad	
	19. Two clowns with small heads	Here are the clowns. Their bodies and their small heads	D	F+	H	

Table 6: Psychogram of Dimitris 1st Rorschach's test.

R = 19	G: 10	F 13	A 5	F% = 68.42%
	D: 5	K 2	Ad 1	F+% = 61.53%
		kan 2	(A) 3	A% = 26.31%
	Dd: 4	FC 1	A/Blood/ Sang 1	Ad% = 5.26%
		CF 1	H 2	(A)% = 15.78%
		kanC	Hd 1	A/Blood/Sang% = 5.26%
		KLandscape	(H) 1	H% = 10.52%
			(Hd) 1	Hd% = 5.26%
			H/Landscape 1	(H)% = 5.26%
			Blood/Sang/A 1	(Hd)% = 5.26%
			Anat 1	H/Landscape% = 5.26%
			Obj 1	Blood/Sang/A% = 5.26%
				Anat% = 5.26%
				Obj% = 5.26%
T. Appr: G D Dd TRI: 2K / 2 Σ C F. Compl. 2k / 0 Σ E choice +: VIII RC %: 26.31 % choice -: IX				

We noticed that many Rorschach's answers of Dimitris were a sign of some kind of failure of containment. Dimitris' answers had no containing objects. He referred to a "bat", to a "monster with four eyes", to a "ghost with a black mask", which were not containing objects. Even when the objects were not fearful, they were not really containing, for example, the "two clowns with small heads" or the "two little persons".

We assumed from many of the answers of Dimitris that he expressed fears and anxieties of the paranoid-schizoid position. An example was the answer "A monster with four eyes", where Dimitris expressed indirectly paranoid-schizoid anxiety. There were many other responses which presented a threatening object, as the monster (1, 7, 10, 12, 13, 17). We also observed that Dimitris rarely expressed anxieties related to the depressive position.

Many responses of Dimitris referred to the body which was deformed (2, 8, 9, 12, 14, 19). The deformations were not significant, for example: "An ant with wings" or "Two clowns with small heads". However, they showed that his conception of security and of limits of the body was problematic, especially as he also gave many responses which referred to parts of the body or the skeleton (5, 16, 17, 18) and two responses which included injured animals and blood (4, 6).

There were injured animals in responses 4 and 6 and blood. Dimitris reacted to the red color of both cards II and III. The same for card IV, he reacted to the color of the card (grey).

His protocol was composed of 19 responses. Only one of them, response 15, was a response which could give him the possibility for identification to a human being. The response was "A man who climbs a tree", so an identification was possible with this male person. Female persons, who would symbolize eventually a maternal object, were totally absent from his answers.

We noticed an aggression to some responses of Dimitris, for example in the answer "Two wild dogs that are fighting and are injured. There is blood all around." expressed aggression, in a scene where the objects were in interaction. There were other responses e.g. "A wolf

is screaming” in which the object is actively threatening and other responses e.g. “A huge insect” in which the object seemed threatening. This excess of aggression showed some kind of disturbance in affect regulation. Affect regulation is associated with mentalization.

The response’s of Dimitris, did not include any information about feelings, thoughts or intentions of the protagonists. Dimitris did not turn any card to other directions, to look at them from another perspective. In his response’s automatic assumptions and a rigid adherence to his own perspective dominated. All those elements could show a mentalization impairment.

Dimitris’s 2nd rorschach’s test protocol and interpretation

Dimitris was 8 years and 1 month old.

Table 7: Dimitris’s 2nd Rorschach’s test protocol.

Card	Responses/ Réponses	Inquiry/Enquête	Coding/Cotation				
I	1.	It could be a bat	Whole card	G	F+	A	BAN
	2.	A stone	Whole card	G	F-	Obj	
II	3.	A stone full of blood	Here is the stone, and the blood is here	D	FC	Obj/Blood/Sang	
	4.	A house in the countryside	You can see the roof and the main building	G	F-	Archit/Landscape	
III	5.	Stones full of blood	They are small stones here, four small stones full of blood	Dd	FC	Obj/Blood Sang	
	6.	Two men who are cooking. There is the pot	One man here, the other one here and the pot is in the middle	G	K	H/Obj	
IV	7.	A bad alien	Its body is here and the two holes here are his eyes	G	F+	(H)	
	8.	A giant with a small head	He is huge. His head is here	G	F+	(H)	
	9.	A stone sculpture	It’s a stone sculpture (whole card)	G	F+	Art	
V	10.	A butterfly, may be made by stone	It is grey like the stone. It is here	G	FC	A	BAN
VI	11.	An old airplane. It cannot fly anymore	It has many wings, here and there	G	F+	Obj	
VII	12.	A deer	It is here	D	F+	A	
	13.	Two deers. They are looking at each other	They are here	G	F+	A	
VIII	14.	Many animals who are looking for food	The animals are here	G	kan	A/Alim	
IX	15.	An animal (he turned the card 180° to the opposite direction v)	v Here is the head and here are the feet	D	F-	A	
	16.	A sailing boat travels	At the bottom is the sailing boat, and all these are the sails	G	kob	Obj	
X	17.	The sea. The bed of the sea is full of fish	The sea is everywhere. And you can see many fish, for example this one, or this one	G	F+	A/Landscape	
	18.	A girl and a boy are dancing at the carnival	Their bodies and their heads are here. And their hands are here	G	K	H	

Table 8: Psychogram of Dimitris 2nd Rorschach's Test.

R = 18	G: 14	F 11	A 5	F% = 61.11%
	D: 3	K 2	A/Alim 1	F +% = 72.72%
		Kan 1	A/Landscape 1	
	Dd: 1	Kob 1	H 1	A% = 27.77%
		FC 3	H/Obj 1	A/Alim% = 5.55%
			(H) 2	A/Landscape% = 5.55%
			Obj 3	H% = 5.55%
			Art 1	H/Obj% = 5.55%
			Archit/Landscape 1	(H)% = 11.11%
			Obj/Blood/Sang 2	Obj% = 16.66%
				Art% = 5.55%
				Archit/Landscape = 5.55%
				Obj/Blood/Sang%-11.11%
				BAN 2
T. Appr. G D Dd TRI: 2 K / 3 Σ C F. Compl. 2 k / 1 Σ E choice +: X RC %: 27.77 % choice -: IV				

The responses of Dimitris to the second Rorschach's test presented some major differences, compared to the first one.

In the first test, containing objects were missing. In this one, some containing objects appeared, for example "a sailing boat", "a pot", "a house in the countryside", even "a stone sculpture" which may represent the stability of a containing object. There are also some persecutory objects, like "a bat" or "a stone full of blood", as well as objects to whom Dimitris can identify himself in the responses "Two men who are cooking, there is a pot" and "A girl and a boy are dancing at the carnival".

In this test, as also in the previous one, the presence of blood and the perseveration, "A stone full of blood", "Stones full of blood", refer to paranoid-schizoid anxieties and fears. In other answers he tried to grasp the concrete elements of the cards to prevent the anxieties from emerging. He did not achieve his goal in answers 3 and 5, when he was overwhelmed by paranoid anxieties and fears. Nevertheless, it is a sign of evolution firstly because the defenses against the paranoid anxieties (perseveration, grasping the concrete elements) became possible and secondly because most of the time he did not describe the action of the persecutory object but he referred to the result. Maybe the scenes with persecutory and injured objects were considered this time too violent for him. The response: "An old airplane. It cannot fly anymore" is a typical answer of fears and anxieties of the depressive position. In this test Dimitris was able to give a complete answer with all the elements of the depressive position and that fact marked an evolution.

In this second test, the responses of Dimitris did not refer anymore to a deformed body. This change showed that the conception of his body, of the security and of the limits was probably different now. He probably felt more secure and he had better conception of the limits and of his body image.

In this test it was easier for Dimitris to find persons to identify with. First of all, the "two men who are cooking". Cooking is not a traditional male activity, so the fact that Dimitris saw men in this card in our opinion showed his desire to find persons for identification. There is another person it was very easy for Dimitris to identify with, the boy at the carnival. This was a special answer because Dimitris can identify himself with a boy who is dancing with someone of the opposite gender, a girl. The protocol included also female figures, like the girl at the carnival and we can make the assumption that the sea symbolizes also an archaic powerful maternal object.

Dimitris included elements about feelings and intentions, for example, in the answers “Bad alien” and “Two deers. They are looking at each other” (sentence which underlined the feelings or intentions of the deers). Additionally, during the test he took the time to turn some cards in many directions and to contemplate before answering. From those data we extracted the result that there was an evolution also in his mentalization capacity: he was not so unflexible anymore, he was able for perspective taking and he was more interested in others intentions and feelings.

Anna’s 1st rorschach’s test protocol and interpretation

Anna was 7 years and 5 months old.

Table 9: Anna’s 1st Rorschach’s test protocol.

Card	Responses/ Réponses	Inquiry/Enquête	Coding/Cotation			
I	1. Two terrifying monsters	You can see the heads and the big noses at the edges	D	F+	A	
II	2. A neck cut by a sword. There is blood everywhere	This is the hole and all around the neck. And here is the blood. The sword is missing. My foster father is collector of pocketknives. He has a key ring with a pocketknife with him all the time	D	KC	Hd/Blood/Sang	
III	3. Chicken bones. They remind me of my foster mother when she cooks chicken	Just here, there are about four bones	Dd	F→K	Anat/H	
	4. Two women who are taking care of each other and are sharing cosmetics	They are here, they are small and here in the middle are the cosmetics	G	K	H/Obj	
	5. A muscled tall man	Here, he has red eyes and nose, and here is his mouth and his cheeks	G	F-	Hd	
IV	6. An elephant	You can see its big feet, its body and its head. His head is a little bit small	G	F+	A	BAN
	7. A wild bear	It has huge legs, here, we cannot see its head, only the body	G	F+	Ad	
	8. A hippo	Here is its head. It is a big hippo	G	F+	A	
	9. An angry bird. I really like “The angry birds” because they are cruel	Whole card	G	F-	(A)	
V	10. An “angry bird”	Whole card	G	F+	(A)	
VI	11. I am afraid of this one. I see only a fly. Nothing else is coming into my mind. Nothing, nothing, nothing	Here, at the top	D	F+	A	
VII	12. Two romantic cats. A boy and a girl. The boy likes the girl	On the left, you see the girl-cat and on the right you see the boy-cat	G	F+	A	

VIII	13.	Two wild dogs that are fighting	You can see here the one, and here the other one	D	kan	A	
IX	14.	A face. Can you see the eyes?	(Where?) They are here	Dd	F-	Hd	
	15.	Orange’s pips	Up here, a lot of pips	Dd	F-	Bot	
X	16.	I don’t know... Maybe a poor guy	He has two eyes here and that’s all	D	F-	Hd	

Table 10: Psychogram of Anna’s first Rorschach’s test.

R = 16	G: 8	F 12	A 6	F% = 75%
	D: 5	K 1	Ad 1	F+ % = 58.33 %
		kan 1	(A) 2	
	Dd: 3	KC 1	H/Obj 1	A% = 37.5%
			Hd/Blood/Sang 1	Ad% = 6.25%
			(Hd) 3	(A)% = 12.5%
		→K 1	Anat/H 1	H/Obj% = 6.25%
			Bot 1	Hd/Blood/Sang% = 6.25%
				(Hd)% = 18.75%
				Anat/H% = 6.25%
				Bot% = 6.25%
				BAN 1
T. Appr. G D Dd TRI: 1 K / 0 Σ C F. Compl. 1k / 0 Σ E choice +: V RC %: 25 % choice -: VI				

Some of Anna’s responses showed a cognitive impulsive style and a lack of flexibility. She responded without thinking and gave responses of bad form. Some typical examples are: “Orange’s pips”, “A muscled tall man”, “I don’t know... Maybe a poor guy”.

Many of Anna’s responses revealed a content of paranoid-schizoid position: we could make the hypothesis that some cards aroused Anna’s paranoid anxieties and fears. In answer 11 she used the negation, saying “Nothing else is coming to my mind” and sometimes the content of the answers is really cruel, e.g. “A neck cut by a sword”. In answer 3 she started her response making reference to animal bones and finally, using defenses, the subject totally changed and she spoke about her mother who cooked chicken.

We noticed the presence of persecutory objects e.g. monsters, wild dogs. We also mentioned the presence of good maternal objects, e.g. “Two women who are taking care of each other and are sharing cosmetics”. Moreover, Anna needed protective objects/hyper-heroes. The presence of those kinds of objects showed that Anna missed some kind of containment against her anxieties and fears which probably related to the paranoid-schizoid position.

Some of Anna’s responses did not show moderation, e.g. “A neck cut by a sword. There is blood everywhere.” or “An angry bird. I really like “The angry birds” because they are cruel. This lack of moderation lead us to think of mentalization impairment, especially as Anna did not attribute feelings or intentions to the persons or animals or to herself, except for answer 11. If one of the features of good mentalization is “the capacity to be relaxed and flexible, not stuck in one point of view” [36], Anna faces mentalization impairment. Additionally, from those answers the perspective taking, the reflection and the contemplation, important features of good mentalization, are missing [36].

Subchapter 3.7 shows an in-depth analysis of each answer of Anna in both Rorschach’s tests.

Anna’s 2nd rorschach’s test protocol and interpretation

Anna was 8 years and 5 months old.

Table 11: Anna’s 2nd Rorschach’s test protocol.

Card	Responses/ Réponses	Inquiry/Enquête	Coding/Cotation		
I	1. A pineapple. The spiny leaves are cut	Whole card	G	F-	Bot
	2. An alien	It has wings and four eyes. It is an alien which flies. You can see here the two wings and here are the four eyes	G	F+	(A)
	3. A rocket. It belongs to an astronaut who is going to another planet	You can see here, it has engines, one on the left and one on the right	G	F→K	Obj/H
II	4. A dog... A wild dog... My uncle’s dog is protective and I like to caress it	You can see its head and his body here. Its head is red. I don’t know why	D	F+	A
III	5. An injured bear. There is blood	You can see the head and the body here at the edge, it is small. And there is blood everywhere	D	FC	A/Blood/Sang
	6. The queen of bees	You can see it, it has multicolored eyes. There is not anything else	Dd	F-	Ad
	7. A pair of earrings	A pair of long earrings, you can see the one here and the other one here	G	F-	Obj
IV	8. The ears, the nose and the eyes of a cow	The eyes are here, the nose is here and the eyes are here	Dd	F-	Ad
	9. The wings of an airplane	You can see the wings here	Dd	F-	Obj
	10. The boots of an astronaut	These are the two boots	D	F+	Obj
V	11. A helicopter	It is the whole image	D	F+	Obj
VI	12. A beetle	It is a big one (Whole card)	G	F+	A
	13. A butterfly	It is a huge one (Whole card)	G	F+	A
VII	14. Two girls who are looking at each other	One on the left here and one on the right	G	F+	H
VIII	15. A crocodile	Its body is here. It has weird skin	G	F-	A
	16. Pink beavers that are climbing a tree	Two beavers are here. And this is the tree	G	kanC	A
IX	17. Two monsters that want to go to the sky	You can see the two monsters here: their heads, their eyes	D	F+	(A)
X	18. Two eyes and tears	The two eyes are here and the tears are here	D	F+	Hd
	19. A cicada	Here, at the top	Dd	F+	A

Table 12: Psychogram of Anna's 2nd Rorschach's test.

R = 19	G: 9	F 16	A 6	F% = 84.21%
	D: 6	FC 1	Ad 2	F +% = 62.5%
		kanC 1	(A) 2	
	Dd: 4		A/Blood/Sang 1	A% = 31.57%
		→K 1	H 1	Ad% = 10.52%
			Obj/H 1	(A)% = 10.52%
			Hd 1	A/Blood/Sang % = 5.26%
			Obj 4	H% = 5.26%
			Bot 1	Obj/H% = 5.26%
				Hd% = 6.26%
				Obj% = 21.05%
				Bot% = 6.26%
T. Appr. G D Dd TRI: 0 K / 1 Σ C F. Compl. 1k / 0 Σ E choice +: III RC %: 26.31 % choice -: IX				

In general, the majority of Anna's responses had good form, a fact that indicated that in this second test Anna did not adopt a cognitive impulsive style. On the contrary, she paid more attention to the cards before giving an answer. A typical example is answer 16, "Pink beavers that are climbing a tree" which was elaborated.

Even if there were answers, although not many, which implied persecutory anxieties, such as "A bear is injured. There is blood", Anna expressed feelings and thoughts related to the paranoid-schizoid position with moderation compared to the first test.

Analysis of the content and of the sequence of anna's rorschach's tests

Anna's first rorschach's test

Card I

Response 1: Two terrifying monsters.

Anna laughed. This response revealed a content of paranoid-schizoid position and, as a consequence, a paranoid anxiety could be hypothesized. The laugh could be considered as an anti-phobic defensive reaction to this anxiety.

Card II

Response 2: A neck cut by a sword. There is blood everywhere.

Inquiry: This is the hole and all around the neck. And here is the blood. The sword is missing. My foster father is collector of pocketknives. He has a key ring with a pocketknife with him all the time.

This response, as the previous one, showed that this card reactivated Anna's pregenital issues. Murders, blood, sword, cut neck are typically associated with archaic fears of the paranoid-schizoid position. More specifically, the cut neck expressed an anxiety related to the integrity of the body and the presence of a sword a persecution anxiety.

Anna showed ambivalent feelings toward her foster father who possesses many pocketknives. She talked about it just after the previous response (cut neck, blood, etc.). A pocketknife can be dangerous, but it has nothing to do with a knife or a sword, it is a kind of tool. Moreover, it is not a Secret: Her father has a pocketknife with him all the time.

Card III

Response 3: Chicken bones. They remind me of my foster mother when she cooks chicken.

At the beginning of the answer Anna talked about chicken bones. This part of the response can be understood to be an indirect reference to mothering (mothers give food to children). Our hypothesis is supported by the second part of Anna's response, concerning her foster mother who cooks chicken. In this part, the reference to a good maternal object was clear.

Response 4: Two women who are taking care of each other and are sharing cosmetics.

This image referred to good female objects and a trusting relationship between those women. It was possible that the sharing of cosmetics symbolized the relationship between mother and daughter or two sisters; anyhow, the relationship between those women is close. This response indicated the internalization of good imagos from the part of Anna.

Response 5: A muscled tall man

Anna described a male figure, "muscled" and "tall". Those two characteristics are typical of a man who can do both, defend himself and protect a woman, a daughter, a girl, a family. There was the possibility that Anna expressed the unconscious desire for a protective natural father. Furthermore, this response showed that Anna has internalized a good male object, during her stay in her foster family with the presence of her foster father.

Card IV

Response 6: An elephant

Response 7: A wild bear

Response 8: A hippo

According to Traubenberg [37] the symbolic request of this card is related to power, strength and authority – provided that the superego role could be that of a father's image, unless is shown a maternal omnipotent image.

For the first time in all tests, Anna gave responses which included animals only. An elephant is a huge animal which can be dangerous if it treads upon something/someone. A wild bear is dangerous in the eyes of a young girl, as Anna. A hippo is an animal of great strength and size.

Traubenberg maintains that this card usually provokes anxiety or uneasiness. On the contrary, Anna used defenses and she tried to grasp the concrete elements of the card.

Card IV

Response 9: An angry bird. I really like "The angry birds" because they are really cruel.

Angry birds are figures of a Finnish animated TV series. Anna showed us, by using her hands like a bomb, how angry birds can cause explosions in the above series. She threw her doll away. She stopped abruptly and she hugged her doll and caressed it.

We observed that Anna entered quite easily in a state of excitation overflow. Her ego could not anymore inhibit her behavior. Anna adopted a position of omnipotence, the position of the super heroes, in order to repress her real position: she was a fragile and helpless girl. The fact that she threw away her doll, showed the extent of her overflow. At the end, Anna managed to reduce her excitability and she caressed her doll, a movement that showed that she wanted to repair the attacked object.

Card V

Response 10: An “angry bird”

Anna gave twice the same response, but this second time she stayed calm. It seemed that the identification with the super heroes of her favorite TV series was important to her. Those super heroes are figures strongly idealized, thanks to their physical power. They are the super heroes/protectors. This need of Anna for those protectors showed that in her internal world it was easy for her to create phantasies of persecution.

Card VI

Response 11: I am afraid of this one. I see only a fly. Nothing else is coming into my mind. Nothing, nothing, nothing...

The response started with a persecuted content, (“I am afraid of this one”), but Anna did not penetrate the paranoid-schizoid material. She used defenses and she focused on the concrete content of the image and more specifically on a detail: “a fly”. Additionally, at the end of her response, the fact that she insisted strongly that nothing came into her mind, made us think that, on the contrary, she had something in her mind and acknowledges the use of the defense of negation.

Card VII

Response 12: Two cats. A boy and a girl. The boy likes the girl.

This answer was related to a defense against the sexual link. That is, the reason why Anna talked about two young cats. Maybe, a relationship between a man and a woman would bring anxiety.

Card VIII

Response 13: Two wild dogs that are fighting.

Contrary to the response in card 7 (two romantic cats), this response was cruel: the wild dogs that are fighting. Anna returned to her paranoid-schizoid phantasies and, impressively, she did not express any feeling of abhorrence about this scene of fight.

Card IX

Response 14: A face. Can you see the eyes?

Anna gave an answer that referred to the whole image, but, firstly, she did not take into consideration the colors and, secondly, she focused on one detail (two holes) to structure her response and this response is of bad form. In addition, the question that she posed showed that she needed to be supported by us. Either way, the fact that Anna stopped talking about the card and started talking to us might be a kind of defense that helped her cut the access to her internal world. We could make assumptions about the holes, the two eyes in the face: in Anna’s imagination there was a face with holes for eyes. It could be a ghost or a dead person.

Response 15: Orange’s pips.

This was the second answer to the same card and the context was totally different, because there was a reference to an orange. However, the answer was not “orange” but “orange’s pips”, the rests of the orange. We could say that the pips are just a detail which was useful as defense (but we could also make the hypothesis that the bunch of pips expresses the phantasy of Anna about the abdomen -the “orange”- of her mother, full of babies).

Card X

Response 16: I don't know... Maybe a poor guy.

It was difficult for Anna to give a response for this card. At the beginning she was not able to give any answer; she simply said "I don't know". After a long pause she said: "Maybe a poor guy". Obviously this card caused anxiety to Anna and she did not give any answer related to the colors. She presented the person of a poor guy, weak and alone, who could not protect himself. Anna through this reference expressed her own fears and anxieties, typical of the depressive position.

Anna's second Rorschach's test

Card I

Response 1: A pineapple. The spiny leaves are cut.

Anna achieved to overcome the fears and the anxieties related to a bad object –an object with spiny leaves– and at the end of the response she felt secure. The pineapple, when its leaves are cut, is transformed to a supportive object which soothes the fear. Besides that, it is a fruit, it can be eaten, so Anna's answer also referred to the food and the nurturer.

Response 2: An alien

This response could refer to paranoid-schizoid fears, but Anna used defenses against those fears. She did not give any detail about the alien; she just focused on the image and shared her phantasies. Furthermore, she expressed neither positive nor negative overtone. The response is very short and hurried, a fact that made us think that this image of an "alien" concealed more conscious and unconscious material, not revealed because of Anna's resistance.

Response 3: A rocket. It belongs to an astronaut who is going to another planet.

If we analyze this response together with the previous one, we can see that Anna surpassed her fears and in this response she presented a "good" male object. But, first of all, the beginning of the answer was "A rocket". A rocket is an object a little bit ambivalent, because thanks to it people go to other planets but it can also be dangerous and many people die in an attempt to go to space. Anna did not allow herself ambivalent feelings about it; she talked about the owner of the rocket who goes to another planet. This way, a protective male person took control of the ambivalent object, the rocket.

Card II

Response 4: A dog... A wild dog... My uncle's dog is protective and I like to caress it.

Anna expressed fears and anxieties of the paranoid-schizoid position. She talked about a dog and after a pause she clarified that the dog is wild. She could not repress persecutory anxiety which overwhelmed her. After another pause, she exited this state and not only she rediscovered the calmness to "fight" against anxieties and fears, but also she remembered another dog, a protective one, an object which offered her protection. Furthermore, she referred to their affectionate link: she liked to caress it.

Card III

Response 5: An injured bear. There is blood.

This response is also a response which presented an animal, but Anna forgot the protective object of the previous response and all her paranoid-schizoid phantasies, anxieties and fears emerged at a scene with a bear, injuries and blood. She emphasized that there was blood, the red color in the card. The color was the definitive factor to her response.

Response 6: The queen of bees.

In a different context, Anna responded giving an image of a powerful (and beautiful, because she is a queen) queen-mother of bees. This image includes danger, because bees can sting humans. Anna did not focus on it. Probably she identified herself with this powerful queen-female object or she has internalized this beautiful and powerful image as a good and powerful maternal object.

Response 7: A pair of earrings

This answer, in conjunction with the previous one, is related to the female beauty and womanhood. Normally, women wear earrings to look attractive and beautiful. But sometimes wearing earrings is painful if the earrings are heavy or very big. In addition, women have to pierce their ears in order to wear earrings. It is not a situation as idyllic as it seems to be at first. Maybe, Anna mentioned earrings, because they represent this ambivalence: the female beauty and the pain.

Card IV

Response 8: The ears, the nose and the mouth of a cow.

Even though with this response Anna did not express any feelings, in a direct way, an association could be made. Cows are the animals that provide milk, known for their breasts and consequently the typical animal nurturer. For that reason, the image of a cow may be similar to the image of a mighty mother-nurturer, in the “kingdom” of the primary processes. Anna talked only about the ears, the nose and the mouth.

Response 9: The wings of an airplane

Anna gave a response of bad form, lacking any special content. The previous response was revealing. She referred to an animal that feeds milk from her breasts and we made the assumption that it was a reference to a mothering imago. This time, Anna did not have access to her primary processes anymore; she did not show any special creativity. She just gave an answer, in part anodyne and the only association that can be made is that an airplane is a medium of transport, a way to leave from a place and its most important part is its wings. Maybe at this moment the test posed difficulties to Anna and she would like, unconsciously, to quit it.

Response 10: The boots of an astronaut

Anna used the entire card to give a response which focused on a detail: the boots. Nevertheless, a pair of boots is resistant and durable, it gives the opportunity to walk everywhere. Even an astronaut wears special boots, in order to walk on other planets. Maybe Anna expressed, in such an unusual way, her desire and need for objects that are resistant and durable and a fear of abandonment. If we follow this assumption, the reference to the astronaut expressed mainly the sadness of the depressive position, when someone realizes the separation. This is the second time Anna refers to the astronaut who travels to other planets.

Card V

Response 11: A helicopter

The content of this response was weak, especially compared with the responses to other cards of this test. Anna gave a short answer with good form and gave the impression that she wanted to find the correct answer and nothing more, so she was interested only in the form and she did not let her imagination free.

Card VI

Response 12: A beetle

As also in the previous card, Anna’s response in this card is simple and short. The only noteworthy thing is that the “beetle” is a flying insect/object, so we identified a conceptual link: helicopter, rocket, beetle, airplane; they all fly. Anna wanted to tell something about dominance in the sky.

Response 13: A butterfly

Again Anna talked about a flying insect, so the previous interpretation is valid for this response too. Nevertheless, there is a major difference between the two answers: a butterfly is a multicolored insect, typically associated with fields and flowers and known for its

beauty. It seems that Anna, by giving this answer, finally brought an image of joy and calmness. On the other hand, the card had no colors and the answer had bad form, so the response seems somehow superficial, showing a defense against depressive feelings.

Card VII

Response 14: Two girls who are looking at each other.

In Anna's unconscious phantasies probably the girls were two adults, a woman and a man. It seems as though it would be impossible for Anna to express and accept, consciously, the heterosexuality of adults, so she talked about two girls who are looking at each other. The answer had a good form, even the action of looking, but Anna limited herself to the description of the scene and did not say anything about the feelings of the girls. However, it was important that Anna implied a close relationship between the girls.

Card VIII

Response 15: A crocodile

Anna had to look at a multicolored card and immediately she activated the mechanisms of the paranoid-schizoid position. She answered "A crocodile", a sign that she felt persecutory anxiety. Her response had bad form and no connection with the colors of the card. In addition, it was a very short answer, without any explanation or comment. For some moments, Anna was overwhelmed by her phantasies and feelings, but she finally controlled herself.

Response 16: Pink beavers that are climbing a tree.

Anna did not abandon this card and she gave a second answer, in a totally different context. First of all, she referred to a color for the first time. She mentioned pink, which is considered a color for girls and women; this way she placed herself in this group of people and she confirmed her gender identity. Anna structured a whole sentence, with motion, with good form, something unusual for her.

Card IX

Response 17: Two monsters that want to go to the sky.

Just after an answer in a context almost idyllic, Anna talked about monsters. We noticed again the presence of a persecutory anxiety and her description had a good form. The idea of the sky who dominated all the protocol was clear here.

Card X

Response 18: Two eyes and tears

The response of Anna was about another face. Maybe the multitude of colored elements blocked the development of her response. Nevertheless, she noticed "two eyes and tears". It was difficult to come to a conclusion about this not detailed response, but we hypothesized that Anna was closer to the depressive position than to the paranoid-schizoid one. She did not mention any infant who cried, so we can make the hypothesis that a child or an adult cried due to sadness.

Response 19: A cicada

A cicada refers to the summer and to vacations far from the city, in the countryside. After the expressed sadness in the previous response, in this response Anna used her defenses. She did not let herself go into her associations. In that manner, the content was not degraded and the defenses brought a strong inhibition.

As we noticed in the second Rorschach's test, the treatment, given after one year of psychotherapy, was beneficial for Anna. During that test, she did not show any excitability or hyperactivity, she responded with moderation without expressing aggression and her responses

and behavior were less impulsive. All these are signs of a progress concerning ADHD symptoms. At the same time, this second Rorschach's test was characterized for Anna by perspective taking, reflection, contemplation, all features of good mentalization. Obviously, she also made progress concerning her mentalization impairment.

Discussion

If we compare the protocols of the three participants before and after one year's psychotherapy, we observe that the children presented changes.

We observed through the protocols that all three children showed a clear amelioration in hyperactivity and attention deficit symptoms. They made progress in: paying attention in general, paying attention to details, being less impulsive and staying calm when seated.

A major difference between the first and the second test is the decrease in the number of answers related to the paranoid-schizoid position. It is an observation which is true for all three participants. Even Dimitris, in his own original way, using defenses, distanced himself from persecutory anxieties in the second test. Based on the theoretical model proposed by Leuzinger-Bohleber and Fischmann [18] which we have already exposed (See p. 2), this evolution is related to a progress regarding ADHD.

Another major difference observed between the two tests is a progress in mentalization capacity. All three children showed a better mentalization capacity in the second test: they were able to contemplate, to attribute feelings, intentions and thoughts to others and to themselves and to show some flexibility.

The first purpose of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of a psychodynamic psychotherapy with incorporated mentalization-focused approaches for children with ADHD and mentalization impairment. Based on those results of both Rorschach's tests and their comparison, we concluded that our model of psychodynamic psychotherapy with incorporated mentalization-focused approaches is effective for children with ADHD and mentalization impairment.

The second purpose of this study was to prove that ADHD and the mentalization capacity are related. From the results of the Rorschach's tests, we have deduced that there is a relation between ADHD and mentalization capacity, because when there is amelioration in ADHD, there is a progress in the mentalization capacity.

Conclusion

Overall, these results indicate that it is useful to interpret ADHD using psychodynamic theoretical models and those interpretations can lead to an appropriate treatment. When there is comorbidity with mentalization impairment, the incorporation of mentalization-focused approaches in psychodynamic psychotherapy seems to be a suitable and effective model of treatment. According to Conway, Oster and Szymanski [38] the psychoanalytic way of work can lead children with ADHD to recognize mental states and in that manner give a sense in their own and others' behavior. In general, we should consider the implications of our findings for the treatment of patients who suffer from behavioral disorders and mentalization impairment.

The model of psychodynamic psychotherapy with incorporated mentalization-focused approaches could be beneficial for the treatment not only of ADHD with mentalization impairment, but also of other disorders. Further research is necessary in this subject.

Our study confirmed our hypothesis, that there is a relation between ADHD and mentalization capacity in children and a research in adults [39] confirmed an analogous relation. It is vital for researchers to further explore this relation.

There are some limitations that we must consider when we interpret the findings of this study. The sample consisted of three children, so future research might examine whether the findings of this study can be verified by studies among a larger sample.

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