LIFESTYLE DEFENSE MECHANISMS
AND DANGEROUS ROAD USE

V. Tummino, I. Cardani, R. Donzelli, G. Fulghesu, Oreste Sardi

Department of Mental Health, Ospedale Sant’Anna, Como, Italy

Abstract

Studies on emotional processes in General, Personality and Health Psychology, together with psychological help demands in several Hospital Divisions, have stressed the significance of emotional antecedents and reactions with respect to health diseases. The general aim of the present study has been to underline relations between patients' psychological defence mechanisms and the street accident. In particular, we wanted to check whether the Lifestyle Defence Mechanisms (LDM) Inventory (by Spielberger & Reheiser, 2000) is currently a valid tool for distinguishing – at a psychological level and even in our country – Person with 1 or more street incident and Person without street incident.

The patients participating in the study were Italian women and men aged 25-65 years, who lives in Como.

Data analyses allow elaborating scores of Rationality/Emotionality (R/E) and Need for Harmony (N/H) defence mechanisms, according to the original construct. Moreover, statistical comparisons were carried out among subgroups of person and the appropriate control groups, accurately selected with the same general characteristics.

Within all the participants, the Patients with a Malignant Tumour (n = 85) had the highest scores, on average, on both the Rationality/Emotionality Defensiveness and Need for Harmony Scales, with significant differences with respect to both Healthy Persons and Cardiovascular Patients. The latter experimental group of Patients did not differ from the appropriate Control group.

Introduction

Spielberger (1988) and successively Spielberger & Reheiser (2000) have developed a Lifestyle Defence Mechanisms (LDM) Inventory including two 12-item self-report scales: Rationality-Emotional Defensiveness (R/ED) and Need for Harmony (N/H). Both scales were derived from refined psychometric work, improving a structured interview questionnaire used by Grossarth-Maticek (1979, 1980) in some studies aimed at outlining psychological characteristics of people more likely to develop body diseases and especially cancer.

The present job, that it was to be a preliminary study, has the objective to evidence the ability of the LDM Inventory to make .......... mechanisms indirectly legacies to the Rationality and Emotionality in persons been involved directly in street incident.
Methods

Before this presentation, the Italian translation of the LDM Inventory was used from 1994 for outlining personological profiles of Dancers and Athletes as compared with Sedentary Persons (Bonaiuto, Biasi, Giannini & Chiappero, 1996; Biasi, Bonaiuto, Giannini & Chiappero, 1999a, 1999b), as well as for preliminary studies aimed at improving adaptation of scales and subscales to the Italian population (Comunian, Biasi, Giannini & Bonaiuto, 2001).

The first Italian LDM Inventory version was individually applied in the biennium 2000-2001 to a large population of 314 adults (both genders, aged 19-65 years), who were in-patients in some Divisions of the St. Anna Hospital in Como (Italy). Moreover, over the same period, the same Inventory was individually administered to over 900 Healthy Persons of the same age range, of varying social backgrounds and residing in various cities in Italy.

Our preliminary analyses and presentations is composed of 433 Healthy Persons, 143 man and 290 women, age y. 19 –60 (Fig. 1).

Computing means and ANOVA for Rationality/Emotional Defensiveness scores and Need for Harmony scores for every participant, it was possible to compare group A with group B.

Results

The results of statistical analyses are reported in Table 1 and illustrated with six diagrams (figs. 1-6).

The Persons that have had incidental street, had lower scores, on Rationality/Emotional Defensiveness with persons without street incident.

Conclusions

Analysis of the answers to the Inventory and the appropriate comparisons, show a negative approach to life and who have a poor and negative quality of

In particular, people with malignant tumours turn out to be more used to resorting to a constellation of psychological defence mechanisms, in particular repression and denial, that inhibit the conscious experience and overt expression of negative emotions such as anger, anxiety and others. In our study, this is reflected by the results obtained with both LDM Scales, focusing not only on women with breast cancer, but also on a broader range of patients with malignant tumours.

Careful attention to emotional states, to motivations and social environments, appears to be valid for the prevention or treatment of the above-mentioned kinds of serious body diseases.