

BRIEF APPLIED TRANSFERENCE-FOCUSED PSYCHOTHERAPY TRAINING FOR PSYCHIATRY TRAINEES IN MALAYSIA: EFFECTS ON ATTITUDES AND CLINICAL CONFIDENCE TOWARD PERSONALITY DISORDERS

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INTRODUCTION

- There are recognized systemic failings of services to manage patients with personality disorders (PD) and an on-going need for support and staff training in meeting the complex needs of patients with PD.
- Psychiatric trainees are often the “first responders” to manage patients with PD but receive little specific training in this.
- Transference Focused Psychotherapy (TFP) is a manualized evidence-based treatment for severe personality disorders based on a psychodynamic approach that focuses on object relations theory.
- There is an expanding experience in applying TFP in different psychiatric settings.
- While there is evidence of effective training of applied TFP in the UK, Europe, South Africa and India, TFP training in Malaysia is a relatively new concept.

AIM

- The aim of the study was to evaluate the effectiveness of a brief teaching programme on TFP as applied to patients with PD, on improving the attitude and technical confidence of psychiatric trainees in one of the major universities in Malaysia, UiTM.

METHOD

- Psychiatric trainees at UiTM received four 2-hour teaching sessions on applied TFP over consecutive weeks via video teleconference.
- Participants completed 2 questionnaires, pre and post teaching.
- The questionnaires used are both validated instruments with good psychometric properties:
 - Attitude to Personality Disorder Questionnaire (APDQ)
 - Clinical Confidence with Personality Disorder Questionnaire (CCPDQ)
- The changes in attitude and confidence were compared using the Wilcoxon signed-rank test.
- A focus group discussion was conducted 2 months after completion of the final teaching session on applied TFP.
- The focus group consists of 8 participants who attended the applied TFP teaching sessions.
- A thematic analysis was conducted.

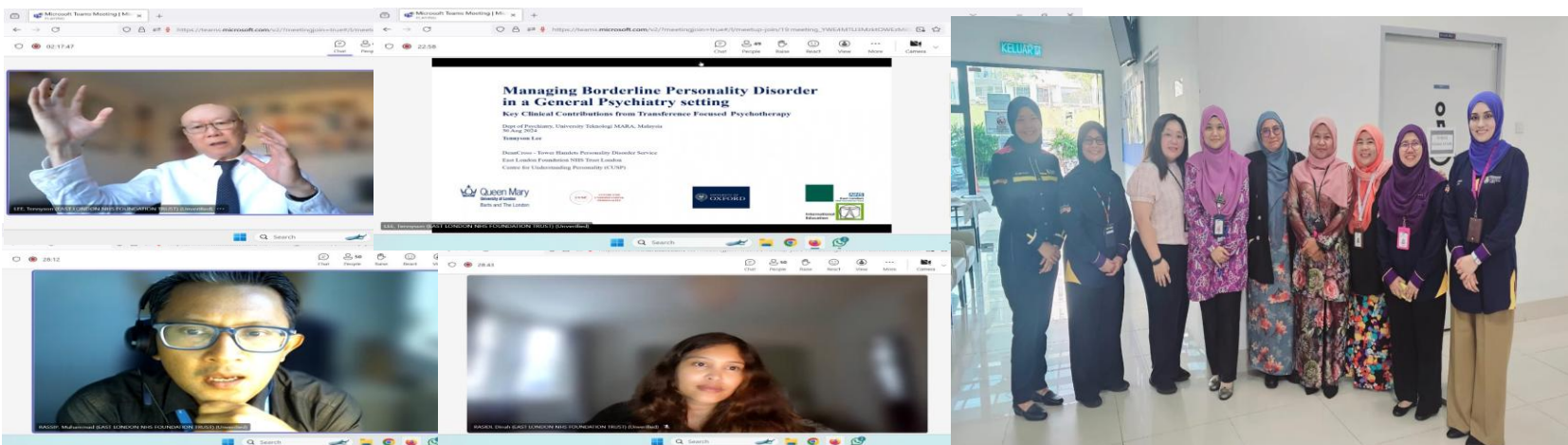
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RESULTS

DEMOGRAPHICS

- 19 trainees completed both APDQ questionnaires pre- and post-intervention and were included in the analysis.
- Out of the 19, only 18 trainees completed both CCPDQ questionnaires pre- and post-intervention.
- 8 trainees participated in the focused group session.



The intercontinental study between UiTM (Malaysia) and Dean Cross Personality Disorder Service, ELFT (UK)

Characteristics	N (%)
GENDER	
Male	3 (15.8%)
Female	16 (84.2%)
AGE	
25-34	12 (63.2%)
35-44	7 (36.8%)
YEARS IN PSYCHIATRY	
<2	2 (10.5%)
2-4	9 (47.4%)
4-6	6 (31.6%)
6-8	2 (10.5%)
TRAINING LEVEL	
1 st Year Trainee	7 (36.8%)
2 nd Year Trainee	3 (15.8%)
3 rd Year Trainee	7 (36.8%)
Final Year Trainee	2 (10.5%)

APDQ

- The total median pre-intervention score was **18.33 (IQR 16.52-19.60)**.
- The total median post-intervention score was **20.70 (IQR 19.50-21.53)**.
- Result showed a statistically significant increase (**p<0.001**) with large effect size (**0.76**).
- This finding indicates improved attitudes toward patients with personality disorders.

CCPDQ

- The total median pre-intervention score was **2.42 (IQR 2.08-2.90)**
- The total median post-intervention score was **3.42 (IQR 3.19-3.79)**
- Result showed a statistically significant increment (**p<0.001**) with large effect size (**0.87**).
- This finding indicates a significant increase in confidence levels

THEMATIC ANALYSIS

- From the thematic analysis of the focus group discussion, 4 main themes were constructed with several subthemes each.

Theme 1: Understanding and using countertransference with patients with PD.

- Participants described increased awareness of countertransference; and the positive and negative effects of countertransference on patient care.

Theme 2: The treatment frame, and the clinician’s role in boundary setting.

- Participants described increased ability to set boundaries with patients with PD.

Theme 3: Shifting attitudes and clinical confidence.

- Participants noticed a change in countertransference which led to change in attitudes.
- Participants described clinical confidence and application of TFP techniques.

Theme 4: Clinical complexity and learning.

- It reflects the clinical complexity and unpredictability in managing patients with PD and the challenges implementing TFP in everyday clinical practice which led to the desire for more practical learning to build confidence.

CONCLUSIONS

- A brief programme of teaching sessions on applied TFP to PDs can significantly improve psychiatric trainees’ attitudes and confidence in clinical encounters with patients with PDs.
- Given the low resource requirements (8 hours of training, delivered remotely), and the growing international experience of effective teaching of applied TFP training, it may be considered not only in Malaysia but in a range of countries.

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