

Abstract ID: 90793

Student: Pilz Rene

Area of Research: Sustainable Health Research and Clinical Science

PhD Programme: DS Lifestyle-Related Diseases (LIFEMED)

Semester: 12

## **The efficiency of Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) for the treatment of substance use disorders: A randomized controlled trial**

Rene Pilz; Riccarda Hartleb; Susanne A. Bengesser; Armin Birner; Nina Dalkner; Frederike T. Fellendorf; Martina Platzer; Robert Queissner; Anita Rinner; Elfriede Greimel; Eva Z. Reininghaus; Human F. Unterreiner

**INTRODUCTION.** Substance use disorders (SUD) can be described as a chronic and relapsing condition that is strongly associated with changes in emotion, motivation and cognition. Emotion regulation is associated with a variety of mental health and well-being parameters (e.g., having satisfying employment, healthy relationships) - long-term substance misuse negatively affects these parameters, so emotion regulation can be severely disrupted. Eye Movement Desensitisation and Reprocessing (EMDR) is a therapeutic method whose effectiveness has been demonstrated primarily in the treatment of traumatic disorders. EMDR is based on the idea of dysfunctional memories that can lead to maladaptive behaviour. At the latest since the assumption of a specific addiction memory, the EMDR method is also considered to have its own field of application for substance use disorders. The aim of this study is to explore the effectiveness of EMDR for the regulation of emotional processes in the context of long-term drug therapy in a therapeutic community. **METHODS.** Male SUD patients receive a standardised EMDR intervention in three weekly sessions. As a control, there is a randomly selected group of patients who continue to receive “treatment as usual” and, as a sham intervention, cognitive training to the same extent as the EMDR intervention. In addition to the pre- and post-tests, there are two follow-up surveys (one and three months later). At all testing times, emotion regulation ability, impulsivity, general symptom burden and psychotherapy motivation are assessed by means of questionnaires. **RESULTS/CONCLUSION.** Emotion regulation: Compared to the control group with sham intervention (CogPack group), the EMDR group showed significant improvement from baseline to the end of the intervention and a trend towards until the first follow-up. Impulsivity: The statistical analysis showed no significant results. The study show that the EMDR method can have a positive effect on emotion regulation.