Behavioral Disturbances in the Course of Frontotemporal Dementia

Background: Behavioral disturbances are prominent in frontotemporal dementia (FTD), and their occurrence has been the topic of several investigations. Nonetheless, the prevalence and severity of behavioral disturbances of patients with FTD in different degrees of dementia severity have rarely been studied. Objective: The aim of this study was to assess and compare the prevalence and severity of behavioral disturbances in patients with mild FTD and in patients with moderate/severe dementia.

Methods: We included 21 outpatients with mild FTD [Clinical Dementia Rating (CDR) = 1] and 19 patients with moderate or severe dementia (CDR = 2 or 3) in this study. Behavioral disturbances were assessed using the Neuropsychiatric Inventory (NPI).

Results: We found a statistically significant difference in the total NPI scores between patients with mild FTD and patients with moderate or severe FTD, the latter scoring higher. Apathy was the most prevalent symptom in both patient groups (90.5 and 100%). Except appetite and eating disturbance, which appeared in 77.8% of the patients with moderate/severe dementia, all other symptoms were clearly less common (<50%).

Conclusion: The results highlight the variability of behavioral disturbances in mild and moderate/severe stages of FTD.

Stichworte: Frontotemporal dementia; Neuropsychiatric inventory; Behavioral disturbance; Apathy