Psychic structure: exploring an empirically still unknown territory.

The Scales of Psychological Capacities (SPC) were developed to gauge structural change, the mode-specific effect of psychoanalysis and psychoanalytic psychotherapies. In this study, as a first step, basic psychometric properties that assess psychic structure were examined. Construct validity was investigated as predictive validity in a known-groups approach. Two predictions were formulated: (1) there are differences in psychic structure between borderline patients, depressive patients, and healthy controls that are verified by the SPC, and (2) borderline patients show inconsistent and divergent self- and object representations most frequently, followed by depressive patients and, finally, by healthy controls, a fact reflected by the SPC. These scales were applied to a sample of 33 borderline patients, 36 depressed women, and 36 healthy controls. Both predictions were confirmed. Thus, empirical evidence is provided of the SPC being a valid measure for assessing psychic structure.