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# **Research on therapist variables and on therapy process-outcome**

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# **Principal categories of variables**

- **Client factors**
- **Therapist factors**
- **Relational factors**
- **Methods/interventions**

# Independent and dependent variables

- **Observable traits**
    - **E1: Target symptoms**
  - **Observable states**
    - **E2: Broad/global measure**
  - **Inferred traits**
  - **Inferred states**
    - **E3: Target at follow-up**
- Search for ATIs**  
(= aptitude x treatment interactions)
- **E4: Global change at follow-up**

# Reviewing process research

- Favours comparison/control sample
- 0 No significant difference observed
- + Favours experimental sample (supports hypothesis)

<b>Client/patient perspective</b>	-	0	+
<b>Therapist perspective</b>	-	0	+
<b>Observer/rater perspective</b>	-	0	+
<b>TOTAL</b>	-	0	+

# Levels of analysis in studying therapy process

Timeframe	Timescale	Process Focus	Outcome focus
Liminal	Fractions of a second	Micro-momentary, e.g. gaze shifts, expressions	-----
Momentary	Seconds to minutes	Moment-by-moment process	In-session impacts
Situational	Several minutes to hours	Session process	Post-session outcome
Daily	Parts of days or whole days in sequence	Session-sequential process	Micro-outcome
Monthly	Large fractions to multiples of months	Phase/short course process	Mini-outcome
Seasonal	Large segments of years to series of years	Medium-course process	Meso-outcome
Perennial	Decades	Long course process	Macro-outcome
Developmental	Life trajectory vectors and stage transitions	Multi-treatment process	Mega-outcome
Biographical	Life course/Lifetime	Therapeutic career	Meta-outcome

# Illustrative finding (1994): Therapist skilfulness

		<b>OUTCOME</b>																		
		<b>Patient</b>			<b>Therapist</b>			<b>Rater</b>			<b>Score</b>			<b>Combined</b>			<b>TOTAL</b>			
		-	0	+	-	0	+	-	0	+	-	0	+	-	0	+	-	0	+	
<b>PROCESS</b>		0	5	6	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	2	0	0	7	10
<b>Therapist</b>		0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
<b>Rater</b>		0	1	2	0	0	2	0	3	5	0	0	0	0	1	3	0	0	5	12
<b>TOTAL</b>		0	6	8	0	0	6	0	3	5	0	2	2	0	1	3	0	0	12	24

# Illustrative category (2004): Therapist well-being

Study	n	Diagnosis	Treatments	Effect size
1	106	Mixed	CBT group	ES1 = 0.00
2	718	Mixed	Psychodynamic	ES2 = +0.10
3	84	Mixed	Individual	ES1 = +0.32 ES2 = +0.42
4	131	Mixed	Eclectic	ES2 = +0.71
5	60	Mixed	Eclectic	ES2 = +0.17
6	110	Drug-dependent	Eclectic	ES3 = +0.33 ES4 = +0.41
7	73	Mixed	Psychodynamic	ES2 = +0.34
8	32	n/a	Individual	ES1 = +0.59
9	33	Agoraphobia	<i>In vivo</i> exposure	ES1 = +0.39

# Therapeutic alliance

Orlinsky et al (2004) findings:

- Noted previous reviews obtaining effect sizes ranging from +0.11 to +0.26
- Reviewed 28 studies published 1990-2000 relating alliance to global outcome
  - ES2 = +0.22
- Reviewed 12 studies published 1990-2000 relating alliance to target change measure
  - ES1 = + 0.17
- Therapeutic alliance consistently linked to effectiveness
- However accounts for smaller proportion of variance than often suggested

## **Illustrative interaction/moderation effects**

- **Therapist directiveness x client resistance**
- **Insight versus symptom-focused methods x client variables, e.g. coping style**
- **Sequencing of factors influencing therapeutic alliance and therapeutic effects**

## **“Robust process-outcome findings”**

- **Patient/client suitability**
- **Client cooperativeness versus resistance**
- **Global therapeutic bond (group cohesion)**
- **Client contribution to the bond**
- **Client interactive collaboration**
- **Client expressiveness**
- **Client’s affirmation of the therapist**
- **Reciprocal affirmation**
- **Client openness versus defensiveness**
- **Therapeutic realizations**
- **Treatment duration**

## Process categories

1. Organisational aspects: *therapeutic contract*
2. Technical aspects: *therapeutic operations*
3. Interpersonal aspect: *therapeutic bond / “working alliance”*
4. Intrapersonal: *self-relatedness*
5. Clinical aspect: *in-session impacts*
6. Sequential aspect of process: *Temporal patterns of events*

# Sources

- Beutler, L. E., Machado, P. P. P., & Neufeldt, S. A. (1994) Therapist variables. In A. E. Bergin & S. L. Garfield (Eds.) *Handbook of Psychotherapy and Behavior Change*. (pp. 229-269). 4<sup>th</sup> edition. New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons.
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