

Use of cognitive behavior therapy in psychiatric disorders : Review of recent studies

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Cognitive behavior therapy was developed by Aaron Beck in the early 1960s as a structured, short-term, present oriented psychotherapy for depression, directed toward solving current problems and modifying dysfunctional thinking and behavior. Three levels of thoughts are addressed in the cognitive model ; core beliefs, intermediate beliefs and automatic thoughts. Triggered by a specific situation, an individual's underlying beliefs influence his perception which is expressed as automatic thoughts particular to that situation. The main principles of CBT should be explained to the patient in the first therapy session. It depends on a strong therapeutic alliance between the therapist and the patient. There is a wide variety of different techniques of CBT. Basically, they fall under 3 categories ; cognitive behavioral techniques, behavioral techniques and purely cognitive techniques. CBT has also been found to be beneficial in a wide variety of somato form disorders and somatic complaints, sexual disorders, as well as personality disorders. Eating disorders are increasingly treated with CBT which seems particularly effective for bulimia nervosa. Any comprehensive treatment program for substance abuse should include cognitive and behavioral techniques. (Author/FT)