



Telepsychotherapy for expatriate patients: benefits and limits

Philippe Drweski, Ludmilla Foy-Sauvage, Nathalie Duriez

► To cite this version:

Philippe Drweski, Ludmilla Foy-Sauvage, Nathalie Duriez. Telepsychotherapy for expatriate patients: benefits and limits. CYPSY26, Jul 2023, Paris Ecole de Médecine, France. hal-04239405

HAL Id: hal-04239405

<https://hal.science/hal-04239405>

Submitted on 18 Oct 2023

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Proposition for orals CYPSY26

July 2023 - Université Paris Cité

Title: Telepsychotherapy for expatriate patients: benefits and limits

Authors :

Philippe Drweski : Clinical Psychologist, Associate Professor at Paris Cité University, laboratoire PCPP UR 4056.

Nathalie Duriez : Professor, Paris 8 University, Laboratoire Psychopathologie et Processus de Changement (Psychotherapy and Change Process). Family Psychotherapist, Group SOS Solidarités - Pôle Addiction IDF - CSAPA SOS 75 Site Monceau

Ludmilla Foy-Sauvage : Msc Clinical Psychology, Psychotherapist, PhD candidate Paris 8 University. Laboratoire Psychopathologie et Processus de Changement (Psychotherapy and Change Process).

Abstract (Oral Intervention):

The globalization and international mobility of the past 50 years has seen the number of expatriates increase worldwide. Expatriation is a form of migration and temporary exile, characterized by a voluntary departure abroad with frequent moves between the host country and the country of origin. As a consequence of this high-mobility and isolation, expatriates are increasingly seeking online mental-health professionals (Astruc & Chaudot, 2015; Drweski, 2022a). As more people collectively turn to new technologies to find answers to their mental health problems (Barak & Grohol, 2011; Bergström, 2013; Schneider & Haddouk, 2022; Tisseron, 2021) extensive research is being conducted to understand and enhance the expanding field of cyberpsychology and telepsychology. Our research and reflections take place in this context. Considering the huge growth of mental health professionals who propose "remote" follow-up using teleconsultation, it seems to us that this extension of the field of clinical practice has to be examined and synthesized to promote change processes (Greenberg, 1986) and avoid the pitfalls related to the context of expatriation.

Through mobilization of clinical situations and contiguous research, we would like to present the characteristics of teleconsultation that seem to promote change processes, but also the pitfalls that professionals must be warned about in relation to an expatriation context.

Firstly, we consider the factors of change for the expatriate population namely; continuity of treatment despite patient migration (Astruc, 2015; Drweski, 2022b); continued links with the culture of origin in a context of isolation (Drewski, 2022b); and quality of presence (Missonnier, Haddouk & Vlachopoulou, 2002). Moreover, with many expat patients expressing a feeling of safety while consulting from home, the safety that could support the emergence of the Self than can occur during expatriation is further examined (Eiguer, 2017; Fonagy et al, 2022; Foy-Sauvage, 2021; Winnicott, 1971).

In counterpoint, we observe that the use of new technologies for psychotherapy in an expatriation context can lead to a certain "evaporation" of the psychotherapy frame, which in turn can lead to therapeutic impasses. The feeling of closeness achieved via teleconsultation should not make us forget the realities of the patient (their pathology, or suicidal risk leading the professional to set up a relay locally) and the realities of the context in which they live.

Ultimately, from a Change Processes Research perspective (Greenberg, 1986) we propose to consider the intersubjective processes in the specific context of teleconsultation and expatriation, especially when professionals are also expatriates.

Based on these observations and poignant field practice, we would like to underline the benefits and the limits of such approaches to promote a global reflection on the "good practices" of teleconsultation in the context of expatriation.

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