Adaptation of the working alliance inventory for the assessment of the therapeutic alliance in genetic counselling

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Abstract

The concept of therapeutic alliance is central to guidance because the mechanism through which the outcomes of empowerment and effective coping are likely to be achieved. To date, there are no published systematic assessments of the therapeutic relationship in guidance . We adapted a previously validated measure of the therapeutic alliance to guidance and assessed its reliability and validity. Participants were enrolled during a clinical genomic study where they were randomized to receive education about carrier results via an internet platform or via a genetic counselor then further randomized to receive guidance (without additional education) or not. We rated the therapeutic alliance from audio recordings of 120 guidance sessions. We modified the observer version of the Working Alliance Inventory (WAI-O), initially designed to assess therapeutic relationships in psychotherapy. We examined internal consistency reliability by calculating Cronbach's alpha and inter-rater reliability through both percent agreement and Gwet's alternative agreement coefficient (AC). Regression analyses were wont to evaluate the connection of WAI-O scores with session length and with the designation of the session together during which prior education was delivered by the genetic counselor or not. The adapted scale had high-reliability characteristics with agreement of 88%-93%, Gwet's AC of 0.84-0.90, and Cronbach's alpha of 0.89-0.93 for the three WAI-O subscales (bonds, goals, and tasks). Although there was no difference in alliance supported whether prior education was provided by the genetic counselor, the entire WAI-O score significantly increased with increasing session length (beta =0.667, p

Biography

Lori H. Erby currently serve as the Director of the Johns Hopkins/ National Institutes of Health Genetic Counselling Training Program. While she is employed at the National Human Genome Research Institute, she maintain close collaborations with colleagues at Johns Hopkins and teach within the training program. Her research focuses on communication within the genetics/genomics context. Particularly, she is interested in providing evidence to inform who needs what kind of communication at what point in time, delivered by what kind of of media. Lori H. Erby ask questions related to how variation in the process of communication in genetic counselling links to outcomes for clients have a specific interest in understanding how to most appropriately tailor communication to populations with limited literacy. She has worked with Debra Rotter on the largest study of routine genetic counselling communication done to date having emerging interests in the outcomes of genomics communication beyond the interpersonal clinical interaction as well as an interest in translating evidence of communication best practices into the healthcare training environment.