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Attachment-based framework in childhood anxiety disorders

In common to the development of anxiety problems, however, is an overgeneralization of predominantly hyper-activating stress-regulatory strategies developed in an individual's specific attachment relationship. The hallmarks of hyper-activation strategies in response to stress and anxiety states are a low threshold for activation of the attachment system, a low threshold for relative deactivation of brain areas involved in controlled, reflective social cognition, and mentalization as well as amygdala hyper reactivity resulting in neuro-endocrinological hyper responsivity. Studies in neuroscience indicate that development represents an experiential shaping of genetic potential and early experiences with the social environment are critical to the maturation of brain tissue. In parallel advances in developmental psychology and child psychiatry, attachment theory as a conception of the mother-infant relationship has become dominant model of human social emotional development available to researchers and clinicians. Updated models of attachment theory that emphasize both emotional and social functions and neurobiological structures now are interfacing with developmental neuroscience to generate a large body of interdisciplinary studies. Modern attachment/regulation theory explains how external developmental and therapeutic attachment experiences transformed into internal regulatory capacities. The scrutinized literature about neuroscience in terms of childhood anxiety disorders and modern attachment theory was collected from different sources including PubMed. Finally, this literature emphasizes the importance of considering an attachment-based framework in interventions for the treatment of childhood anxiety disorders in particular in identifying the attachment relationship as a key target of clinical work, alone or in addition to pharmacological or other treatment components.

Biography

Ebru Ozlem Albayrak has completed his PhD from Marmara University in Istanbul and Postdoctoral studies from Bakirköy Mental Training and Research Hospital in Istanbul. She is the Director of Ludens Psychiatry Clinic. She has published more than 10 papers in reputed journals especially on anxiety and mood disorders.

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