

Temperament and character in myocardial infarction patient.

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Coronary heart disease is the first cause of death and disability in Italy and in all the industrialized countries.

Empirical evidence, even if not in an univocal way, underlines the importance of some psychological characteristics among type A personality, anger and hostility, stress, vital exhaustion, lack of social support, anxiety and depression by heredity, sex, age, fatness, hypercholesteremia, smoke, diabetes and hypertension like risk factors to develop cardiovascular problems. At the moment there is lack of evidence about the way in which these behavioural or personality traits are linked and the way in which they can influence the genesis of vascular diseases. The Cloninger's personality model based on temperamental and behavioral traits could be useful to this purpose.

The aim of this research is to analyse the temperament and the behavior of a group of acute myocardial infarction patients to identify possible peculiar traits. The sample is composed of 100 patients hospitalised for acute myocardial infarction (AMI) and of a control group (100 people) without cardiovascular problems. The Cloninger's Temperament and Character Inventory (TCI) has been administered to all the sample.

The questionnaire of 240 "true-false" items is composed of four temperament evaluation scales (novelty seeking, harm avoidance, reward dependence, persistence) and three character evaluation scales (self-directness, cooperativeness, self-transcendence).

The two groups are significantly different to the reward dependence temperament scale ($p < 0.05$), and to self-directness ($p < 0.01$) cooperativeness ($p < 0.01$) character scale, with minor scores in AMI patients.

According to literature, in our results AMI patients mean a major difficulty to express emotions, if not hostility and anger, a major tendency to retire into themselves and the use of a self-centred perspective to analyse problems.

The results show the importance of Cloninger's model to understand the cardiopath personality pointing out the behavioral traits of the AMI patient, and because of this changeable with a right support.