

ABSTRACT

The objective of this investigation is to gain a deeper understanding of the reasons and motives for General Practitioners, (GPs), decisions and practice regarding referral of depressive patients to psychotherapy in general and Gestalt psychotherapy in particular, and also to look into how the GPs way of thinking and practice may influence Gestalt psychotherapy.

The work has been performed as a phenomenological exploration into the subject matter. Data has been obtained by means of qualitative interviews and analysed based on a phenomenological approach.

The data were organized thematically according to the set of reasons expressed by the interviewees regarding:

- the GPs reasons for referring patients to psychotherapy in general
- the GPs reasons for not referring patients to psychotherapy in general
- the GPs reasons for not referring patients to Gestalt psychotherapy in particular
- the GPs view on necessary requirements for hypothetically being inclined to refer patients to Gestalt psychotherapy

Literature which relates to the GPs practice in general, to the GPs criteria for referral of patients, the relationship between GPs and Gestalt psychotherapy and the GPs view on their own role as therapists for patients suffering from depression, has been reviewed and discussed in light of the findings with reference to selected themes uncovered in the interviews and the investigation.

Conclusions based on the findings and discussion in the study is presented. Some potential consequences for Gestalt psychotherapy practice are considered and some areas for future research are suggested.