
Affective Touch and How It Relates to Psychopathology: The Pursuit of Early Trauma Traces on Body-Brain-Mind-Skin Axis

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Abstract

Skin is the largest organ covering the entire body, where we perceive the world through tactility. From a developmental perspective, the most primitive and influential communication channel of touch is of utmost importance to understanding more complex issues about social cognition, empathy (Di Plinio et al., 2022), and the primitive sense of Self (Gallese, 2009). Also, these early intercorporeal experiences are engraved in a child's developing body-brain-mind systems and therefore, they shape future interpersonal and intrapersonal patterns, body ownership, interoception, multisensorial integration, etc. and consequently, they predict future psychopathologies. As recent neuroscientific studies have shown, the earlier trauma, the more severe damage to the body. So that reason, this study was conducted with 10 psoriasis patients (whose skin axis has already been damaged) to investigate the social, relational, and intercorporeal roots of psoriasis disease encoded in the soma through psychoanalytic interviews and Rorschach Test at the dermatology department of Trakya University Faculty of Medicine in 2022. The content analysis of Parisian School was used to find a relationship between early traumatic experiences and the pathogenesis of psoriasis by looking through tactual responses and body image responses in Rorschach Test. Hypotheses of the study based on the relationship between psoriasis and early traumatic experiences have been largely confirmed. Finally, the complexity of skin disorders has been discussed neuropsychodynamically in the scope of early relational trauma, affective touch, and neurogenic inflammation context between psychoanalysis, neuroscience, and dermatology disciplines.

Keywords: affective touch, intercorporeality, skin disorders, neurogenic inflammation, trauma, psychopathology, Rorschach Test

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