

ReAttach

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Impact

At the end of this thesis, I would like to reflect on the value that the ReAttach studies described in this thesis might have for society. Researchers need to bridge the gap between science and practice to contribute to the community by putting their work at society's service.

I feel a responsibility towards society and, in particular, towards the patients and professionals who work with ReAttach. Since ReAttach has been developed in clinical practice, the connection with clinical work was there from the start. Practice-based research is necessary to test potentially effective interventions, investigate whether there are any adverse effects, make the intervention theory more explicit, and integrate practical experiences and scientific findings.

General practitioners and psychologists mainly use ReAttach in primary mental health care services and counseling. For patients with complex psychiatric disorders, ReAttach is not used as a stand-alone treatment, only in combination with psychiatric treatment. Paramedics frequently combine ReAttach with other therapies in neurorehabilitation, speech therapy, and occupational therapy settings to improve the learning conditions.

Although the scientific evidence needs to be expanded further, I would like to emphasize three critical themes that I use as guidelines for future development of ReAttach: Accessibility, Affordability and Quality.

Accessibility

Mental health is something we wish for everyone, but that is not self-evident for many. Following Fusar-Poli et al. (2020), who define good mental health as a state of well-being, allowing individuals to cope with daily life stressors and functioning productively, the COVID-19 pandemic has put global mental health under enormous pressure (Yao et al., 2020). More than ever, mental health promotion, increasing distress tolerance, and stress-resilience are essential to prevent a worldwide rise of mental health problems (Fusar-Poli et al., 2019; Shalev and Shaprio, 2020; Yao et al., 2020; Arnoudova and Amaro, 2020). ReAttach is currently available in fourteen countries, including low-income countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia, the Balkan region and India since more than 2400 ReAttach therapists are trained. As reflected by this thesis, we hope to contribute to the increase of mental health by implementing an accessible transdiagnostic intervention for children and adults with mental health problems across the world.

Affordability

The cost-effectiveness of ReAttach and W.A.R.A. has not yet been scientifically researched. Nevertheless, I hope to contribute to affordable mental health care with these brief interventions. As shown in the ReAttach studies of this thesis (chapters 2,3,4 and 7), mental health might be promoted in a short period of five ReAttach sessions. The ultra-fast W.A.R.A. intervention might be used to relieve negative affect. W.A.R.A. online training for therapists is free and available for professionals from all over the world (Weerkamp-Bartholomeus et al., 2020).

In 2018, we have founded an open access, peer-reviewed scientific journal with an independent editor in chief and independent editorial board: Journal for ReAttach Therapy and Developmental Diversities. JRTDD does not demand publication costs or article processing fees.

Quality

My motivation to start this Ph.D. trajectory reflects my wish for participation in or initiation of scientific research. ReAttach Therapy International Foundation's establishment as a responsible non-profit organization for the quality assessment of ReAttach Training Courses has also contributed to quality objectives. Evaluation of the transfer of a ReAttach and W.A.R.A. to the next generation of therapists and evaluation of training courses are necessary steps for quality implementation in clinical practice.

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