

**Abstract:**

**E. Schwarz, A. Bauer, C. Mai, F.O. Hauf, D. Bobrowski (2006): Long-term follow up of patients with environmental illness under special consideration of patients with chemical intolerances or Multiple Chemical Sensitivity (MCS). Scientific Report. Bredstedt/Germany, December 2006 (92 Seiten)**

**Objective:** The aim of this study was to determine, whether a multidimensional therapeutic approach can produce lasting improvements in the health of chronically ill environmental medicine patients. The therapeutic concept of the clinic is founded on a “bio-psycho-social” model of disease and consists of training measures to improve coping; counselling and recommendations for the reduction of exposure, changes in lifestyle and nutrition as well as complementary psychotherapeutic and behavioral measures. **Design:** An observational follow-up study was done on 224 patients with environmental illness and/or chemical sensitivity of a specialised clinic for environmental medicine, psychosomatic and psychiatric illnesses and addiction. Patients symptom scores, health related quality of life and depressive feelings were assessed at the time of the first visit (t0) and six (t6), twelve (t12), and 24 months (t24) later in a follow-up study. Adherence to therapeutical recommendations were assessed as well. Diagnostic and therapeutical data were obtained from the doctor in charge. **Results:** Patients symptom scores, health related quality of life and depressive feelings of patients were reduced by 25-35% after 24 months of follow up. Most of the results grew better with time (t24>t12>t6). The best improvement was found in quality of sleep (35%), depressive feelings (33%), neuropsychological symptoms (30%) and loss of energy (28%) of patients. Patients who adhered to given recommendations in regard to minimising exposure to pollutants, changing lifestyle habits or complementary psychotherapy, respectively, had better results than patients who did not. Repeated visits to the clinic had better positive results than single contacts. Even patients with a problematic or fixed belief system concerning their illness got better though only if they came more than once. **Conclusion:** Relevant improvement in the health of patients with chronic environmental illness can be seen to be obtainable with the help of multidimensional therapeutic interventions treating all aspects of the illness.

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