

Affect Regulation and the Autonomic Nervous System in psychotherapeutic process: a critical review

A.Tarabanov

*Institute of Neurocommunications and Psychotherapy,
tarabanov@inncp.com*

Background and aim: The psychotherapeutic process and its neurobiological background recently becomes the object of contemporary neuroscience. We can mention at least three psychotherapeutic paradigms deeply integrated with nowadays neuroscience: affective neuroscience ([J.Panksepp, 2004](#)), neuropsychanalysis ([M.Solms, 2015](#); [G.Northoff, 2009](#)) and interpersonal neurobiology ([L.Cozolino, 2002, 2006](#); [D.Siegel, 2012](#)). Autonomic nervous system plays an important role in affect regulation both of patient and psychotherapist while the process of psychotherapeutic interaction. The main aim of the report is to observe and summarize the main research activities and approaches towards the role of autonomic nervous system in psychotherapeutic process.

Materials and methods: The report compares main concepts of autonomic nervous system in psychotherapeutic process and come in touch with several case studies on peculiar problematic. Also we deal with researches of attunement within interaction of two brains, especially in relation to arousal and energy shifts ([A.Schore, 2003](#)) and brain-brain interactions which promote the development of specific cerebral circuits ([C.Trevarthen, 1993](#)).

Results: In the report the activity of sympathetic and parasympathetic systems are observed in correlation with main points of psychotherapeutic relations. The actual theories related to this subject (S.Porges „vagal system“) and related therapeutic concepts such as the neuropsychanalytic vision of limbic system and several structures in the brain processing the emotion and memory ([M.Solms & O.Turnbull, 2002](#)) are also mentioned.