

## SUMMARY

### **A qualitative examination of the self-esteem of psychotherapeutic patients**

The purpose of this study was to qualitatively examine the meaning that psychotherapeutic patients associate with their self-esteem in order to contribute to a better understanding of what these patients' views of low and high self-esteem entail.

A study of literature was conducted to expose different aspects of the term 'self-esteem' from several theoretical approaches. Furthermore, the substructure of the hypno-therapeutic approach (of which the medical hypno-analytical model was the main approach) was especially analysed to ground the psychotherapeutic treatment received by the research participants.

Eleven research participants were involved in the study according to the extreme, as well as the confirming and disconfirming case methods of sampling. They were selected on the basis of homogenous characteristics, namely: white, Afrikaans-speaking men in the low to high average socio-economic sphere.

This study was done within a qualitative or interpretive paradigm – the study therefore focuses on the understanding (*verstehen*) of the meaning individuals attach to their self-esteem and not on the explanation (*erklärung*) thereof.

The data gathering techniques were the basic individual interview, the self-esteem induction and observation. The textual data, transcribed from audiocassettes, was analysed qualitatively with the help of the *ATLAS.ti*-program according to the principles and procedures of grounded theory (including open, axial and selective coding).

Data analysis led to, amongst other things, the co-construction of 23 categories (with numerous subcategories) of which the central phenomenon was identified as 'low self-esteem'. Relations could be drawn between the core category and other categories and the following storyline, which could suggest a possible theory, was conceptualised:

- Negative suggesting in the patient's past leads to low self-esteem, which is unhealthily handled within his emotional problematics by means of a negative thinking scheme for which therapy is received from a medical hypno-analytical perspective to treat the negative labels in order to facilitate attachment of positive meaning to his self-esteem.

The meaning(s) ascribed by psychotherapeutic patients to their self-esteem seem to be, in accordance with the post-modern spirit of the age (*Zeitgeist*), holistic in nature.

Key terms:

Self-esteem; Psychotherapeutic patients; Qualitative research; Understanding; Meaning; Hypnotherapy; Medical hypno-analytical model; Self-esteem induction; Labeling theory; Negative labels; Positive labels; Holism; Post-modern spirit of the age