

**INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR APPLIED CHESS
NATIONAL SPORTS ACADEMY "V. LEVSKI" - BULGARIA
CENTRAL INSTITUTE OF MENTAL HEALTH - MANNHEIM, GERMANY**



Second International Scientific Conference

BIO-PSYCHO-SOCIAL APPLICATIONS OF THE GAME OF CHESS

The conference is dedicated to the 5th anniversary of the International Society for Applied Chess

SUMMARIES

CHESS FOR AFRICA

Dr. Anita Stangl

Woman FIDE Master, CEO of MedienLB, Starnberg, Germany
E-mail: anita.stangl@medienlb.de

THE APPLICATION OF CHESS IN PROFESSIONAL COACHING AND IN SOCIAL PROJECTS

Stefan Kindermann

Grandmaster; CEO of Münchener Schachakademie (Munich Chess Academy)
Chair of the Münchener Schachstiftung (Munich Chess Foundation), München, Germany
E-mail: info@mucschach.de

WHAT CAN PSYCHOLOGICAL RESEARCH ON CHESS EXPERTS TELL US ABOUT CHESS TEACHING AND TRAINING?

IM Prof. Fernand Gobet

Professorial Research Fellow at the London School of Economics and Political Science, UK
E-mail: F.Gobet@lse.ac.uk

Numerous books provide advice about how to progress in chess, from beginner to amateur to expert and beyond. However, this literature consists of a compilation of principles and heuristics that have been taught over the years without critical evaluation. Rare are the books or videos that are based on scientific principles. In this talk, I will first review some of the key findings in

chess research (e.g. the limited capacity of attention and short-term memory, the important role of domain-specific perceptual chunks, and the fact that search is highly selective) and the theories that account for them. Then, I'll show how it is possible to develop teaching principles based on these findings and theories, as well as other findings in cognitive psychology, and provide some examples. I will also discuss the extent to which similar principles can be used to develop more efficient methods of training at high levels of skill. Finally, I'll speculate on whether such methods can be used beyond chess.

CHESS AND THE HUMAN BRAIN

Prof. Merim Bilalić

FIDE master, Professor at Northumbria University, UK

E-mail: merim.bilalic@northumbria.ac.uk

CHESS - AN ANALOGY ON DECISION-MAKING: DOES THE GAME OF CHESS HELP IN THE TREATMENT OF MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS?

Prof. Dr. Tjalf Ziemssen

Professor at University of Dresden, Germany

E-mail: Tjalf.Ziemssen@ukdd.de

CHESS: HOW TO CAPTURE MOOD AND EMOTIONS

David Llada

FIDE Chief Marketing and Communications Officer

E-mail: david.llada@fide.com

David Llada (Spain, 1978) is a chess promoter who has played different roles in chess, as a journalist, organizer, and author. During the past four years, he has worked for FIDE as Chief Marketing and Communications Officer. However, among chess fans, he is widely known for his work as a photographer, having captured many iconic images of chess players. During his talk, David will share with us some of his photographs and tell the stories behind them. He will also explain what moved him to use photography to promote the game, how he approaches photography to capture the emotions that chess players experience, and what stylistic and technical considerations he applies to his photography work.”

THE ECAM METHOD „COGNITIVE TRAINING THROUGH CHESS” AND DEVELOPMENT INTO THE APP GYMCHESSE

Juan Antonio Montero & Asier Rufino

Juan Antonio Montero - Psychologist, Inventor of the ECAM method „Cognitive training through

chess”; Chair of the Magic chess club, Mérida, Spain; ISAC member

E-mail: presidente@chessmagic.net

Asier Rufino - FIDE master, Professor at University of Deusto, Spain; Co-Founder of GYM-CHESS

E-mail: asier.rufino@tecnalia.com

Towards 2010, the Club Magic Extremadura, in Spain, with an important career in chess (several Spanish titles, one European title) decides to take a step further in chess. The Club begin to provide chess classes for social purposes (social inclusion) in prison, in centre of minor offenders, for homeless people and for therapeutic purposes in centres for addicts, for elderly with the aim of keeping their minds in shape, even with Down Syndrome, disability or cerebrovascular accident.

The traditional method of teaching chess does not work satisfactorily with this approach, and gradually, the team led by psychologist Juan Antonio Montero is creating and testing with the different users a methodology of cognitive stimulation based on chess which obtains results in the sense of adherence to the classes, a continued personal perception of many of them based on cognitive improvements (especially memory) and some encouraging results through basic research studies that allow to hypothesize about the suitability of this methodology for these groups.

In 2016, Montero patented the system called ECAM Method, in the form of a genuine cognitive training (and rehabilitation) system through chess. Until 2019, more than three hundred people in the Spanish region of Extremadura and especially at the therapeutic level (addicts, elderly without impairment and with cognitive impairment, early stages of Alzheimer’s, Down syndrome, severe mental disorder, Parkinson’s syndrome, cerebrovascular accident) took part in these programs. At the same time, professionals from Spain and Latin America begin to use this system thanks to online training courses and conferences given by Montero and his team. At the same time, Dr. Sabine Vollstädt-Klein began to investigate groups of addicted people using this method. **The pandemic disrupts** classes and research but instead allows the ECAM Method to fund the Gymchess application, with the intervention of journalist and communicator Leontxo García, the entrepreneur and startup expert, Asier Rufino, in association with Montero. It was presented internationally at the Spanish Pavilion of the Dubai International Expo in December 2021, which perfects and expands the ECAM Method, which contains more than 500 batteries of cognitive exercises and whose purpose is to train the mind and delay brain aging.

CHESS AS AN ADD-ON INTERVENTION IN SUBSTANCE USE DISORDERS

Prof. Dr. Sabine Vollstädt-Klein

Head of research group on Neuroimaging of Addictive Behaviour, Central Institute of Mental Health, Medical Faculty Mannheim / Heidelberg University, Mannheim, Germany

E-mail: s.vollstaedt-klein@zi-mannheim.de

Background

It is well known that cognitive impairment in substance use disorders (SUD) facilitate instances of relapse. Cognitive Remediation Treatment (CRT) for mental disorders aims to improve cognitive functioning in general, but in addition, it is suggested to improve treatment outcome. In two ongoing studies in alcohol use disorder (AUD) and tobacco use disorder (TUD), we are using a chess-based CRT (CB-CRT) program that uses the game of chess as a tool to apply efficacious CRT. The studies aim to study the effects of CB-CRT as add-on therapy including the examination of the underlying neurobiological mechanisms.

Methods

Individuals with either AUD or TUD between 18 and 65 years of age are participating in a randomized, controlled clinical functional magnetic resonance Imaging (fMRI) trial. Control groups are receiving treatment as usual. Therapy add-on groups are receiving a 6-weeks CB-CRT as a therapy add-on. FMRI tasks and neurocognitive tests from the Cambridge Neuropsychological Test Automated Battery (CANTAB) are being administered before and afterwards. All individuals will be followed up on monthly for three months to assess potential relapse.

Results

Preliminary neurocognitive data in smokers indicate that cognitive control improved after treatment, particularly with stronger effects in the group receiving CB-CRT on measures of compulsivity. Regarding treatment outcome, our data suggest a beneficial effect of CB-CRT indicated by a significant larger increase in days of abstinence compared to standard treatment.

Conclusions

In summary, our preliminary results suggest that CB-CRT appears to have an overall positive effect on short-term abstinence as an add-on therapy in treating SUD. The underlying mechanism could be an improvement in cortical control and decision making, which is related to an enhancement in the reflective system. CB-CRT is a cost-effective, easy-to-use treatment add-on that patients can continue to use even after discharge.

APPLICATION OF THE CHESS GAME IN SOCIAL WORK WITH PSYCHIATRIC PATIENTS

Dmitry Komarov

International Grandmaster; Kyiv Day Center for Medical and Social Rehabilitation, Ukraine
E-mail: gmkomarov@i.ua

INDIVIDUAL COUNSELING ON THE CHESS MODEL AT COMPLEX FOR SOCIAL SERVICES “CHOVEKOLUBIE”

Nadezhda Kuzermanova, Anna Tilova

Nadezhda Kuzermanova - Psychologist, Manager of the Association “Chovekolubie” - Pazardzhik, Bulgaria

E-mail: nadia@chovekolubie.org

Anna Tilova - Social worker at Complex for social services “Chovekolubie” - Pazardzhik, Bulgaria

E-mail: pr@chovekolubie.org

This research paper presents data on the use of the chess model for individual counseling needs in social work. The applicability of the developed Guide for individual counseling based on the chess model has been assessed and topics for upcoming research on the topic have been outlined. Keywords: individual counseling, chess model.

WHAT CHESS CAN TEACH CHILDREN FOR LIFE?

Dr. Radislav Atanassov

Assistant Professor, National Sports Academy “Vassil Levski”, Sofia, Bulgaria

E-mail: baschradi@abv.bg

CHESS THERAPY FOR SCHOOL CHILDREN

Joanna Zbroniec

Chess coach, school psychologist, Oława, Poland

E-mail: szachoterapia@gmail.com

I have a master’s degree in psychology and I am a chess trainer. For nine years now I have tried to use the potential of the game of chess to support the development of children and adolescents in Poland.

For me chess is primarily a bridge leading me into the inner world of the children I work with. As a psychologist I see that my main task is to develop the natural potential of each kid under my care. But first I need to get to know the kid. Setting up a chessboard I start out on equal terms with the kid. The chessboard is the bridge between me on the one side and the kid on the other. The greatest challenge is to get to know the kid’s inner world, imagination, fears and also the dreaming potential. Only such intimacy with the kid gives me the right to try to educate him and teach him new behaviors. That is the essence of chess therapy.

Sitting down at the chessboard I am mostly curious. I try to play on my half of the board as passively as possible. I open my position just enough to be able to create various possibilities on the board, for example to be able to give check at some point. I have noticed that an attack on the king is taken by kids quite literally as an attack on themselves. It causes stress and the urgent need to get out of this uncomfortable situation. Aiming for a check I try for the kid to be able to choose from the three possible defenses: to capture the checking piece, escape and interposition. The kid’s choice gives me the chance to start a conversation asking about the reasons for his choice. This choice is never based on chess know-how because Very often I work on the defensive strategies against check and I try to relate them to real behaviors of the kid. Usually children find it hard to interpose, which I interpret that they are not used to asking for help.

With the help of chess therapy I work with kids and adults with various emotional disturbances, including ADHD, Asperger’s and autism. I know that chess is not the recipe for everyone but it can give many people the chance for a positive change in a pleasant way.

CHESS CURRICULUM TO ADVANCE STUDENTS’ THINKING AND LEARNING SKILLS IN PRIMARY EDUCATION

Luis Blasco de la Cruz

FIDE commission “Chess in education”

E-mail: edu.web@fide.com