

## **Changes in Disorder related Autobiographical Memory during Weight Restoration in Acute Anorexia Nervosa Patients**

(project no. 57-16)

### **Authors**

Christoph Nikendei, MD, MME, Julia Huber, MS, Joe Simon, PhD

### **Aim**

This study aims to assess disorder-specific overgeneral autobiographical memories and underlying mechanisms and neural activation in acute anorexia nervosa (AN) patients during weight restoration, compared to healthy controls (HC) as well as at risk controls (RC).

### **Background**

AN patients retrieve more 'Overgeneral Autobiographical Memories' (OGM) than 'specific' autobiographical memories compared to HC. Previous research discusses an affect regulative function of OGM as well as links to executive function and rumination known as CaRFAX-model. A deficit in emotion regulation is at the core of AN and a central disease maintaining mechanism. However, there is a substantial need for research regarding the underlying mechanisms and consequences of autobiographical memory impairments in AN patients and its potential relevance for remission.

### **Method**

In a prospective comparison study, 40 AN patients will be assessed at the beginning and end of inpatient psychotherapy treatment and compared to 40 matched HC, re-assessed after the identical time interval. An additional investigation of 40 RC aims to identify OGM as a potential risk factor that may already precede the onset of an eating disorder. From the AN patients and HC sample, 30 persons each will undergo cross-sectional functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) while performing the AMT that addresses the neurobiological basis of OGM.

### **Execution**

December 2016 - December 2018

**The project is funded by the Swiss Anorexia Nervosa Foundation.**