

Psychobiological perspective in obsessive compulsive disorder and its relation to clinical factors: Duration, severity and insight into illness

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ABSTRACT

Objectives: The aim of the study is to check the hypothesis of the presence of biological impairments (structural and neurophysiological abnormalities) in OCD and to identify if there are relations between this impairment and certain varieties of the disorder such as clinical factors (duration, severity of illness and insight into illness) and neuropsychological functions. **Subject and Methods:** The current study was carried out on sixty five patients from Mansoura University Hospitals. They were diagnosed according to the criteria of DSM IV TR (2000). Twenty normal control subjects were selected to match the patients group for age, sex and level of education. They were subjected to 1- psychiatric and psychometric assessment in the form of: psychiatric history and examination sheet designed by Mansoura Psychiatric Department, Y-BOCS, insight into illness (by item 11 of Y-BOCS), intelligence assessment by selected subtests of WAIS and memory assessment by WMS. 2- brain imaging (MRI) and 3- electroencephalogram (EEG). **Results and conclusions:** biological impairment was detected in this study among OCD patients in the form of structural abnormalities (bilateral reduced caudate volume), neurophysiological impairment (abnormal EEG Findings mainly in the left front temporal region). No significant correlations were detected between structural and physiological impairment with the severity or the duration of illness which may reflect the stability of the biological impairment in this disorder. The results of neuropsychological tests revealed poor performance on visual memory and visuospatial tasks among the patients in comparison to the controls. There is significant association between abnormal EEG findings and decreased performance on the visuospatial tasks. This findings may imply further support for the role of special neural circuits in the mediation disrupted cognitive process in OCD. There are no specific EEG and MRI findings was found to characterize the poor insight subtype of OCD. There are significant differences between patients with good and poor insight in the performance on object assembly test and visual reproduction test. Also, presence of poor insight may be considered as a potential marker for the severity of illness.

Introduction

OCD will still be with us in the next years as a major neuropsychiatric disorder with an immense impact in our society both in terms of suffering for individuals and their families and economic cost to our society. Its treatment is likely to be more frequent than a total life time cure of the disorder. Nevertheless, we can wish and we can hope for something more (Okasha et al., 2000). Recently, there has been major growth in researches interested in the underlying etiology of OCD. Many studies, suggested that OCD is

a heterogeneous disorder that results from complex interaction between psychological and biological factors (Leonard et al., 2001). It is therefore important to identify homogenous subgroups of OCD for understanding any given relationship having conceptual diagnostic, clinical or biological meaning. However, there are very few prospective studies (Lekman et al., 2001). Appropriateness of classifying some atypical cases with poor insight under the classical entity of OCD has been questioned by many authors