

Case Report

Lycanthropy Can Be Seen Also in Saudi Arabia. Three Case Reports in a Year

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Abstract

Lycanthropy is an unusual psychiatric syndrome involving the delusion of being transformed into an animal or being an animal with a very few case reports for this very rare psychiatric disorder. Three cases reported within a year in the psychiatric department of our private hospital at Saudi Arabia. This paper presents a full description of their social situations, clinical presentations and the DSM IV diagnostic criteria for each case presented, with a discussion of the possible underlying psychopathology. Cases with lycanthropy can also be seen in our daily practice among the patients with some special needs regarding diagnosis and management.

Introduction

Lycanthropy has been derived from two greek words, lykoi "wolf" and anthropos "man". In folklore and superstition it is applied to a human being who has changed or is being changed into a wolf, or is capable of assuming the form of a wolf while retaining human intelligence. In psychiatric literature, lycanthropy is an unusual belief or delusion that one has been transformed into an animal or a behavior suggestive of such belief (Keck et al, 1988). The imagination of the capability of the human being to transform into an animal is a phenomenon that has been described in many cultures since early history. In Europe the imagination of being transformed into a wolf or a dog was widespread in the middle age, in South-East Asia and Africa animals chosen are the tiger and hyena, the crocodile and shark (Garlipp P, Godecke-Koch T, Dietrich DE, Haltenhof H, 2004). Regarding this paper it will presents 3 cases seen within about one year duration (April 2003 till February 2004) attending Al-Hammadi Hospital, 240 beds; our work private hospital in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, each case will presented in details regarding the important psychosocial data, clinical picture and their psychopathological aspects.

Case (1):

A fifty-two year, male Saudi patient, primary school education, business man, married with 4 kids, coming alone for psychiatric help in a secret manner; the patient gave a 3 months history of depressed mood, isolated himself most

of the time in his bed room with little eat and sleep imagining himself as a donkey in its shape and produced its voice. History taking from the patient revealed that; his father was died 25 years ago and was leaving a further younger 5 kids; three brothers and two sisters; and he was the eldest who was helping the father in some small business from that time till the last 4 months he was taking care of his brothers and sisters and made a very much business and a lot of money without any help from them and was helping them in their studying till all be highly graduated from university, most of them get married by his help; but within the sudden all grouped against him and obliged him to leave all the family business and every one took his money without efforts or help in collection of this money, also he was obliged to write a consent that he has no rights or authorities in every things of the family wealth leaving a very little money for him. General medical and neurological evaluations were done also with some investigations as brain MRI and EEG which all revealed nothing abnormal. The patient received paroxetine hydrochloride 40 mg, olanzapin 10 mg and lorazepam 1mg daily, the patient's condition started to improve in the follow up visit after 3 weeks, no more lorazepam also dose reduction for the other 2 drugs to become 20 mg and 5 mg respectively with a biweekly brief supportive psychotherapy sessions; within 3 months patient had no more depression but a monthly follow up visits with only paroxetine for the next 6