

Prevalence and Phenomenology of Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD) Symptoms in a Sample of Egyptian Schizophrenic Patients Compared to Non-psychotic OCD Patients

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Abstract

Background : In recent years the issue of co-morbidity of schizophrenia and OCD has attracted attention of several authors. However results of research are still far from giving solid conclusions. **Aim of the work:** To assess the incidence of OCD symptoms in chronic schizophrenic patients, and to compare the symptom content of schizophrenics with OCD symptoms with that of non-psychotic OCD patients. **Methods:** A total of 132 patients. 100 of them meeting the DSM-IV diagnostic criteria of chronic schizophrenia, and 32 meeting the DSM-IV diagnostic criteria of non psychotic OCD, in second part of our work we compared the symptom content of schizophrenic patients with that of non-psychotic OCD patients. **Results :** Incidence of OCD symptoms in schizophrenics of our sample was 40%, apart from longer duration of illness. socio-demographic data profile didn't significantly differ between schizophrenics with OCD symptoms and those without., comparison of OCD symptom content didn't differ between schizophrenics with OCD symptoms and non-psychotic OCD patients **Conclusion:** Increasing evidence suggest that OC symptoms are not simply expression of schizophrenic psychosis but they constitute symptoms that resemble OCD,co-morbid schizophrenia and OCD appears to have a negative impact on the patients suffering, and failing to recognize these symptoms may lead to unnecessarily classifying the patient as treatment resistant.

Introduction

A relatively higher prevalence of OCD symptomatology in schizophrenic patients (15%) has been documented, as compared with that in general population (Berman, et al., 1995)a. This finding has raised some intriguing questions regarding the meaning and implications of this association. Yet despite this high prevalence, few studies have addressed the issue of comorbidity of schizophrenia and OCD symptoms (Maj, et al., 2002). Although data from earlier studies (Stengel, 1945; Rosen, 1956) performed without use of systematic diagnostic criteria indicated that obsessive-compulsive symptoms rarely occurred in schizophrenia (0.5-3%) and that when they occurred they were associated with a good prognosis, recent data from more systematic studies suggest that OC symptoms occur frequently in patients with schizophrenia and that patients with such symptoms have a more problematic course of illness than those without OC symptoms (Berman et al., 1998). Zohar et al., (1991), reporting on a small series

of Schizophrenic patients with OC symptomatology, found that with the aid of patient and focused questioning, the subjects investigated were able to distinguish obsessions and compulsions from psychoses, the psychotic symptoms were perceived as ego-Syntonic and The OC symptoms may be overlooked in patients who experience persistent psychotic symptoms, in part because severe obsessions and compulsions resemble symptoms of psychosis (Insel and Akiskal,1986), (Zohar et al., 1992, 1999) However, if religious, sexual, aggressive, and/or somatic preoccupations are rated as obsessions and secondary repetitive behaviors are classified as compulsions, a significant number of patients with schizophrenia can be identified as having OC symptoms (Samueli, et al., 1993; Berman et al,1995a ; Bermanzohn and Siris,1995). Such patients are more likely than those without OC symptoms to have a poor outcome e.g., longer hospitalization, worse social functioning,