



POSTER PRESENTATION

“Cabbage lice infestation” – how psychiatrists solved this, in the past 1500 days

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Abstract

Introduction: Delusional parasitosis, also known as Ekbom’s syndrome, is a form of psychosis that people acquire a strong delusional belief of being infested with parasites, whereas in reality no such parasites are present. Patients affected by this psychiatric condition usually go to several doctors, as dermatologists, in the expectation to have their conviction of real infection confirmed and treated. They have indeed skin lesions, either self-inflicted by itching or by attempts to eliminate the presumed infection with abrasive products.

Methods: We present a case-study of a 68 years old female patient followed at the Psychiatry department in the past four years, after being referred by a dermatologist and how this case has been diagnosed and treated, and the improvements achieved.

Results: The patient had a delusional belief of being infested with cabbage lice, presenting skin lesions in both lower limbs, self-inflicted with pliers in an attempt to remove the supposed lice. This condition caused her serious dysfunction, interfering with her personal and social functioning at home, work, with her relationships, and hobbies. She was treated

with haloperidol combined with a topical antihistamine. This treatment resulted in total remission of her symptoms.

Discussion: She kept being followed in the Psychiatry department in outpatient care regimen for the last four years, during which she remained without symptoms, believing we cured her infection. She gradually got back to her usual daily activities and her responsibilities at work, recovering her functionality.

Conclusions: This case illustrates the importance of the observation, diagnosis and treatment by Psychiatrists, and in this case the administration of antipsychotics as the proper treatment to disorders that have been first observed by other medical specialties, combined with a solid therapeutic alliance with patients and proper referrals between colleagues. This brings attention to the consequences of working closely with other medical specialties, as psychiatry and dermatology or any other medical specialty according to how the body is involved in the delusion, raising awareness to the importance of Liaison Psychiatry at the General Hospitals and in Primary Care.

Supplementary material: Complete presentation available at <http://ijcnmh.arc-publishing.org>

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