

Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder as a Part of Prodromal Schizophrenia

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Prodromal schizophrenia presents with a wide variety of psychiatric symptoms including obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) or obsessive-compulsive symptoms (OCS). However, this differentiation between a sole diagnosis of OCD and prodromal schizophrenia seems challenging in some settings.

We present a sixteen-year-old male with six-months history of recurrent intrusive images and fearfulness, in addition to decreased socialization. He was managed as a case of prodromal schizophrenia and was treated with antipsychotics. His obsessions decreased but he continued to exhibit negative schizophrenia within two years of follow-up. Acknowledging the diversity of prodromal schizophrenia presentations rather than treating symptoms as a cross-sectional diagnosis (especially in high-risk population for psychosis) is crucial for a better management.

He is insightful about possible psychiatric etiologies for his condition.

The initial differential diagnosis was schizophrenia (prodromal phase) versus obsessive-compulsive disorder or temporal lobe epilepsy. Therefore, full investigations were performed including complete blood count, urea and electrolytes, liver, renal and thyroid function tests, ceruloplasmin, ammonia, and lactate dehydrogenase, brain CT scan and electroencephalogram; all were normal. Therefore, his provisional diagnosis was prodromal schizophrenia, and he was prescribed olanzapine 10 mg daily, which resulted in noticeable improvement of the intrusive mental images. During two years of follow-up, the patient started to exhibit marked negative symptoms of schizophrenia including asociality, anhedonia and blunted affect. Therefore, the medication was increased to the maximum dose with no tangible improvement; consequently, aripiprazole was prescribed up to 15 mg daily with modest improvement in his overall condition.

DISCUSSION

Potential Conflicts of Interest: None.

Competing Interest: None.

Sponsorship: None.

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Ethical Approval: Approved by the Ethical Committee for Human Researches and Studies, Sultan Qaboos University Hospital, Oman.

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