Increase of Frequency in Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder in Children with Rheumatic Fever: Preliminary Study

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Introduction: Genetically, susceptible children who are infected by Group A β-hemolytic streptococci may develop a systemic autoimmune disorder known as rheumatic fever (RF). Several psychiatric disorders, in particular obsessive–compulsive spectrum disorders (OCD), attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), and tic disorders have been described in RF. This study aims to examine neuropsychiatric symptoms which are determined in pediatric patients with RF.

Methods: Thirty consecutive patients with RF (mean age 12.8±1.9 (9-16) years; M/F; 16/14) were studied for a structured psychiatric evaluation according to DSM-IV-TR by a child and adolescent psychiatrist. Also, Yale-Brown obsessive compulsive scale (Y-BOCS), Yale global tic severity scale (YGTSS), and Turgay Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADD/ADHD) DSM-IV-Based Diagnostic Screening and Rating Scale were performed to the patients.

Results: According to DSM-IV-TR criteria, 20 (66.6%) cases had at least one psychiatric disorder. The most frequent diagnosis by the cases is found to be ADHD (n=16). Other diagnoses were OCD (n=4), anxiety disorder (n=4), tic disorder (n=3), and enureis nocturna (n=1). Parents have declared fewer ADHD symptoms (n=6) by using the ADD/ADHD DSM-IV-Based Diagnostic Screening and Rating Scale than the clinician as usual in the literature. The mean total score of Y-BOCS was 2.3±6.2; the mean obsession subscale score was 1.3±3.6 and the mean compulsion subscale score was 0.96±3.6. The mean score of YGTSS was 0.5±2.2 in our study group.

Conclusions: On the basis of our results, especially ADHD symptoms seem to be more frequent in patients with RF. Thus, clinicians should not only deal with the treatment of RF but also be aware of the neuropsychiatric manifestations for early diagnosis.