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The Anxiety disorders: Cognitive therapy mechanisms

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It is indisputable that cognitive therapy for most of the anxiety disorders has proved increasingly successful forms of treatment. However, in spite of this success, it remains disappointingly unclear precisely why and how cognitive therapy is so effective. It also remains unclear whether forms of therapy allegedly not directly involving cognitive processes (e.g., exposure therapy) may depend for their efficacy in part on such processes. More generally, it is unfortunately the case that there has been insufficient research designed to identify the mediating mechanisms that are responsible for therapeutic success. The notion that the apparent mechanisms producing recovery from anxiety disorders are the actual ones is almost certainly simplistic.

The talk will focus on the above issues. In addition, there will be a discussion of the methodological and other problematical issues that need to be resolved if research on the mediating mechanisms in the treatment of the anxiety disorders is to provide accurate and precise information. In essence, how can we maximise the probability of establishing causality in this complex area?

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Differential diagnosis of Landau–Kleffner syndrome versus post encephalitis syndrome in 13 year old boy with Autism Spectrum Disorder

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Landau–Kleffner syndrome is a rare childhood neurological condition of unknown etiology involving a loss of previously acquired language skills and developmental regress with abnormal EEG.

Method: We describe a case of a 13 year old boy who at the age of 3.5 years was bitten by a tick. Two months after the bite he started to rapidly lose his language and developmental skills and developed petit mal seizures which subsided after valproic acid treatment. However, the developmental delays persisted.

Findings: Clinical interview of the parents revealed that the boy had some repetitive behaviors prior to the age of 3. The observation of the patient revealed the developmental age of 3 - 4 years old, with numerous repetitive vocalizations and movements along with difficulties switching activities. Long-term video EEG showed left temporal slowing, left anterior, mid, and posterior temporal and left central, parietal, occipital atypical spikes, spike and slow waves, and rare generalized bursts of spike and slow waves. MRI of the brain w/o contrast showed minimal hyperintensity in the left hippocampus and a punctate hyperintense lesion in the left temporal lobe. PET brain imaging showed mildly asymmetric diminished activity in the left basal ganglia, compared to right. The post encephalitis panel (endemic to Russia) did not find antibodies, indicating that the patient did not have encephalitis after the tick bite at the age of 3.5. The parents/teachers questionnaires revealed a very low level of adaptive functioning in all areas in a patient who met criteria for Autism Spectrum Disorder with a known medical condition (Landau-Kleffner Syndrome).

Conclusion: during the course of diagnostic investigation we were able to rule out post-encephalitis syndrome and rule in Landau-Kleffner syndrome in a premorbidly Autistic child.

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