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Pseudobulbar Affect Presenting as Hypomania

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Abstract

Pseudobulbar affect (PBA) is a behavioral syndrome associated with various neurological conditions that typically manifests as uncontrollable laughing or crying. PBA can significantly impact the quality of life of patients affected as these spells can be inappropriate to the social setting or incompatible with the patient's emotional state. The underlying mechanism of PBA appears to be associated with disinhibition in neuronal pathways involving dopamine, serotonin, and glutamate, but the exact mechanism remains unclear. One hypothesis for the pathology of PBA is that it is the result of disruption of the corticopontine-cerebellar circuits, impairing cerebellar modulation of affect, and leading to uncontrolled emotional lability. Stroke, and other neurological disorders, interrupt these neuronal circuits causing disinhibition of the voluntary control of emotional expression. It is extremely important to recognize and appropriately diagnose the condition. We present a case report of an 85-year-old female patient who presented with a thalamic stroke, and she subsequently developed hypomania with symptoms of decreased need for sleep, mood lability, pressured speech, and religious preoccupation. This case discusses a unique presentation of PBA with hypomania.

Keywords: antidepressants; antipsychotics; depression; hypomania; mania; pseudobulbar affect; stroke.

Figures

Figure 1. MRI brain axial T2 of...

Figure 2. MRI brain axial DWI of...

Figure 3. CTA of the head shows...

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