The prevalence and characteristics of Munchausen syndrome in patients with complex regional pain syndrome

Department of Anesthesiology, Nagasaki University School of Medicine
Tetsuya Sakai MD

Methods and Results

60 patients who have diagnosis of CRPS from 2004 to 2014.
Fulfilled criteria of factitious disorder by DSM-5?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Patient</th>
<th>onset</th>
<th>self-induced presentation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>48 y male</td>
<td>surgery</td>
<td>paralysis, ligation of the limb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34 y female</td>
<td>surgery</td>
<td>paralysis, convulsion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41 y female</td>
<td>injury</td>
<td>paralysis, aphasia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The prevalence of Munchausen syndrome in patients with CRPS was 5%. All patients had hospital dependency and fabrication.

Diagnostic Criteria for Factitious Disorder

A. Falsification of physical or psychological signs or symptoms, or induction of injury or disease, associated with identified deception.
B. The individual presents himself or herself to others as ill, impaired, or injured.
C. The deceptive behavior is evident even in the absence of obvious external rewards.
D. The behavior is not better explained by another mental disorder, such as delusional disorder or another psychotic disorder.

Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 5th edition.

Case 1

A 48-year-old man received a transposition of the ulnar nerve for the treatment of right cubital tunnel syndrome. Shortly after surgery, he had severe continuous pain and swelling in his right arm, which were diagnosed as CRPS. He also complained of sleep disturbance, general fatigue, lower back pain and so on. Five months later, he went to see a physician because of his stomachache. An abdominal computed tomography and X-ray revealed some bolts and clips in his bowel (Fig. 1). Approximately 2 years later, the swelling in his right arm got worse suddenly. We found the ligation of his right upper arm by a band (Fig. 2).

Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 5th edition.

Introduction

A factitious disorder is an illness that has been fabricated by the patient. Munchausen syndrome is known as a subtype of factitious disorder with predominantly physical symptoms. Munchausen patients present with an intentionally produced illness in order to play the sick role and seek medical care. Some studies have reported the prevalence of Munchausen syndrome in patients with chronic pain (0.14%) or neurological syndrome (0.3%). However, there have been few reports concerning complex regional pain syndrome (CRPS). The objective of this study is to investigate the prevalence and characteristics of Munchausen syndrome in patients with CRPS.

Fulfilled criteria of factitious disorder by DSM-5?

Yes
3 patients

No
57 patients

Patient onset self-induced presentation

48 y male surgery paralysis, ligation of the limb
34 y female surgery paralysis, convulsion
41 y female injury paralysis, aphasia

The prevalence of Munchausen syndrome in patients with CRPS was 5%. All patients had hospital dependency and fabrication.

Diagnostic Criteria for Factitious Disorder

A. Falsification of physical or psychological signs or symptoms, or induction of injury or disease, associated with identified deception.
B. The individual presents himself or herself to others as ill, impaired, or injured.
C. The deceptive behavior is evident even in the absence of obvious external rewards.
D. The behavior is not better explained by another mental disorder, such as delusional disorder or another psychotic disorder.

Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 5th edition.

Conclusion

The prevalence of Munchausen syndrome in patients with CRPS is higher than those with chronic pain or neurological syndrome.

References