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A BRIEF REVIEW ON COTARD DELUSION

M. Anusha & Dr. V. Asha Jyothi

Department of Pharmacy, St. Pauls college of pharmacy, Turkyamjal, Hyderabad, Telangana.

Email: ashajyothivadlapudi@gmail.com

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Abstract:

Cotard delusion is one of the rarest mental disorder in which the person believes that he is dead or may believe loss of organs, blood or body parts. It increases with increase in age. It is caused by drugs Acyclovir, valacyclovir and also due to misfiring in brain and due to brain tumour and migraine. The symptoms includes the delusion of negation, psychotic depression, based on the stages. It is determined based on the DSM-5. It is treated by drugs Anti depression, Antipsychotics and mood stabilizers. The ECT therapy is more effective.

Keywords:Cotard delusion, misfiring, DSM-5, ECT.

Introduction:

Cotard delusion is one of the rarest mental disorder. It is also known as walking corpse syndrome. It is a subtype of depressive illness. Cotard delusion is the belief of being dead.⁽¹⁾It is also believed as the loss of organs, blood, bodyparts or soul. It is the self certifiable syndrome of delusional psychosis.⁽²⁾

Epidemiology:

The incidence was found to be equal for both men and women. The prevalence is said to be increased with increase of age.⁽³⁾

Etiology:

- Misfiring in brain
- Brain tumour
- Migraine
- Schizophrenia
- Drugs such as Acyclovir, valacyclovir.

Pathophysiology:

Cotard delusion is described to occur in the organic lesion of the non dominant tempo parietal cortex and also in the migraine.

It occurs from the neural misfiring in the fusiform face area, in the fusiform gurus and also in the amygdalae (recognizes the emotions in the face)⁽²⁾.

The neural disconnection generally leads to lack of recognition of normality. It leads to direalisation and disconnection from environment.

As the patient watch their face in the mirror he observes that there is no relation between their face and sense and he believes that he do not exist.

It is commonly seen in people with psychotic disease such as schizophrenia. It can be also seen in clinical depression, derealisation and brain tumour.⁽⁴⁾⁽⁵⁾

It can occur due to drugs such as Acyclovir and valacyclovir. The Metabolite of Acyclovir is 9 - Carboxy methoxy methyl guanine(CMMG). The increased concentration of this metabolite leads to the symptoms of cotard delusion.⁽⁶⁾

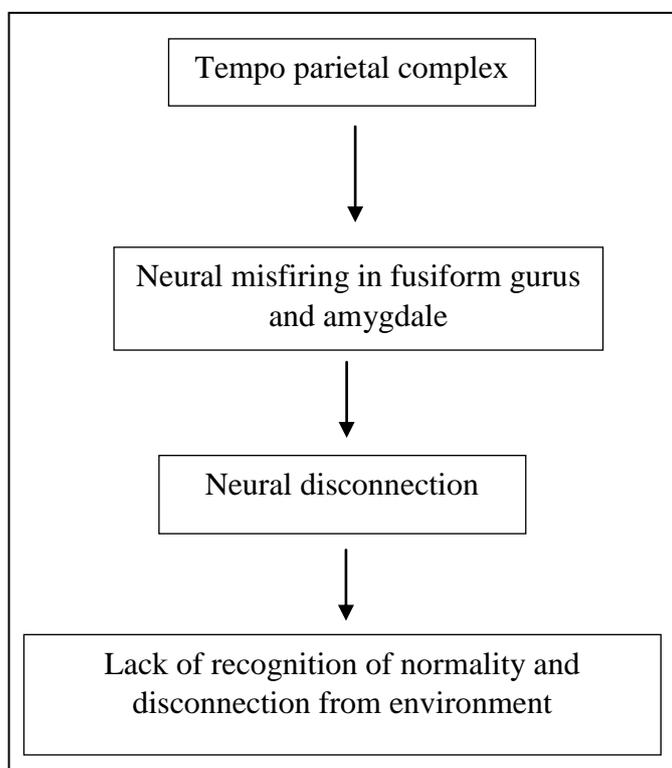


Fig.1 Pathophysiology of Misfiring of brain.

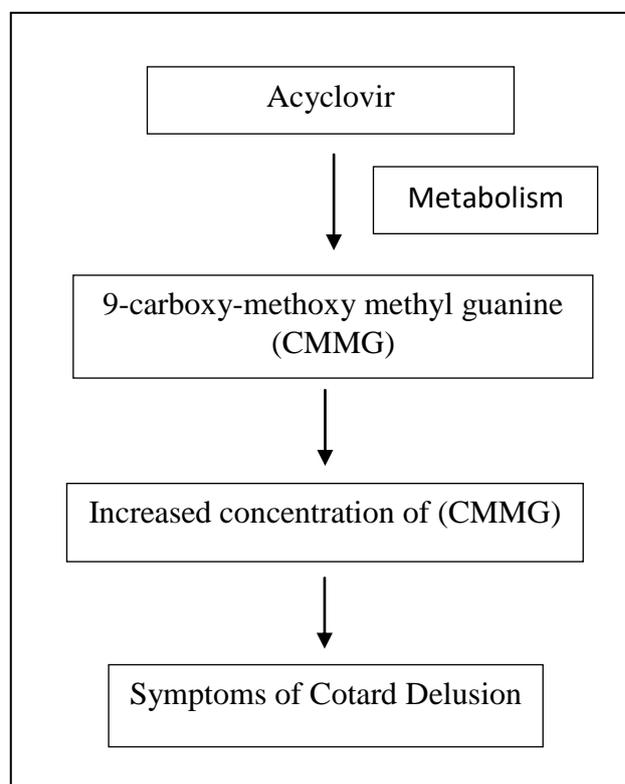


Fig 2 Metabolism of Acyclovir.

Symptoms: It is of the stages:

1. Germination Stage: Psychotic depression and hypochondrial symptoms.
2. Blooming stage: Delusion of negation.
3. Chronic (depressive paranoid type) stage: Severe delusion and chronic psychiatric depression.⁽⁷⁾

Types:

These are three types

1. Psychotic depression - Melancholia and Nilhistic delusions.
2. Cotard I type - Nilhistic delusions with no affective symptoms.
3. Cotard II type - Symptoms of Anxiety, depression and auditory hallucinations.

Diagnosis:

Cotard delusion comes under the category of somatic delusion in the DSM-5 (diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders, 5th edition).

Treatment:

The drugs that are used for the treatment are Antidepressants, Antipsychotics and mood stabilizers The electroconvulsive therapy was found to be more effective for cotard delusion.⁽⁸⁾

Conclusion:

Cotard delusion is the rarest syndrome, such that much more research must be conducted to recognise the disease causes and the diagnosis to it. At present the treatment is given based on the symptoms presented, extended to the treatment based on the diagnosis. The pathophysiology of the disease must be clearly identified by further research.

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Corresponding Author:

Dr.V. Ashajyothi*,

Email: ashajyothivadlapudi@gmail.com