A Case of Alleged Matricide in Atypical Capgras Syndrome

Radwa Hanafy, MBBCh, MSc [1]; Farhad Huseynov, MBBS [2]; Abidemi Onabadejo, MD [1]

[1] - Saint Elizabeths Hospital - Department of Behavioral Health, Washington, D.C., USA
[2] - Bursa Uludag University, School of Medicine, Bursa, Turkey

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Abstract

Introduction:

- **Delusional Misidentification Syndromes (DMS) are categorized under neuropsychiatric symptoms.**
- **Capgras Syndrome is one of the most studied DMS with matricide as the most dreaded outcome**

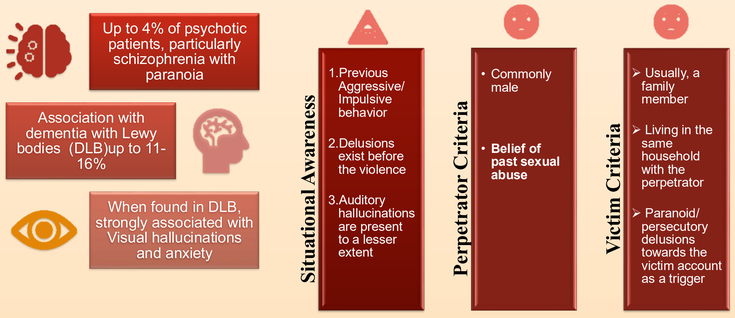
Case:

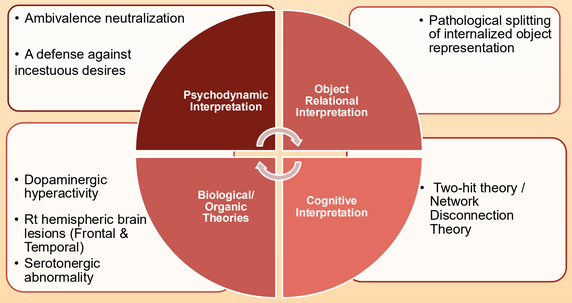
- **35-year-old male with past Hx of violence, unspecified psychosis and involuntary hospitalization admitted for competency evaluation.**
- **He is pending charges of 2nd degree murder after he allegedly stabbed his mother in her face and neck which led to her death.**
- **He reported delusional believes that the victim was "speaking like a robot" and not his "real" mother. He also believed that "people are not real" and they were replaced by "Jinn"**
- **He displayed abnormal neck movements which he reported causing "relief" to unpleasant sensation**

Discussion:

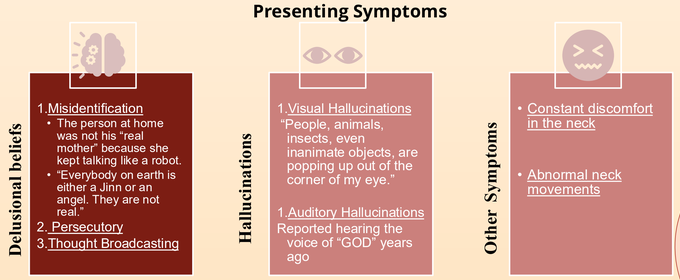
- **Matricide is a rare crime ranging 1-4%. Most common tools used are sharp force, followed by blunt trauma and asphyxia.**
- **Offenders commonly male, aged 20-39, also affected by mental illness, often schizophrenia and psychotic disorders.**
- **Paranoid and persecutory delusions are common trigger for the crime.**
- **DMS, especially Capgras Syndrome, often present before the crime.**
- **CS may be related to neurological illness, and matricide may be associated with Hx of childhood abuse, being single, living in the same house with the mother, domineering mother and absent father.**

Capgras Syndrome





Case Presentation



Past Psychiatric History
- Multiple involuntary admissions at PIW and SEH
- Hx of prior violence towards mother
- Hx of aggression and hostility requiring emergency medications

➢ Patient reported Hx of sexual abuse by a family friend

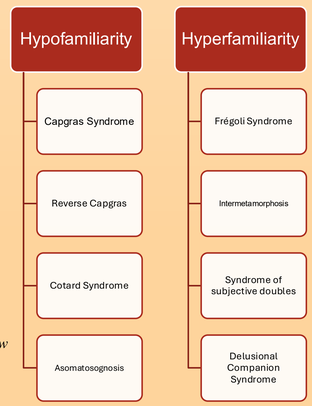
Family Hx
Patient reported mother had Hx of dysthymia

Medical Hx & Exam
Hx suggestive of treated syphilis
Neurological Exam and consultation yielded the diagnosis of **Predominantly cervical tic-spectrum movement disorder with prominent sensory phenomena and intermittent dyskinetic features**
The patient has been refusing lab work and imaging

Delusional Misidentification Syndrome (DMS)

Delusional Misidentification Syndromes (DMS) are a group of neuropsychiatric delusional symptoms that have been linked to neurodegenerative and psychiatric disorders.

They have been classified by Christodoulou into hypo and hyper familiarity syndromes. Capgras syndrome is considered the most widely studied subtype of DMS.



For more information on DMS, scan below

SCAN ME

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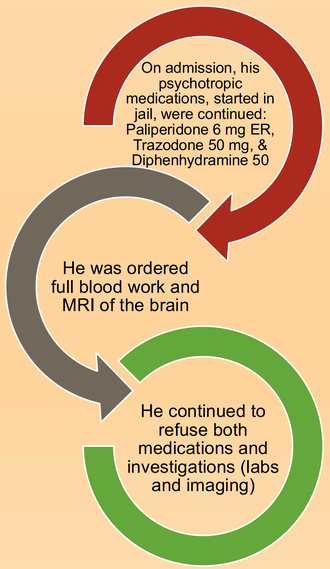
Disconnection Hypothesis	Impaired Belief Evaluation	Dopaminergic dysregulation
➢ Disconnection between • Intact face recognition • Absent Autonomic/emotional response (SNS) ➢ Lesions in the left retrosplenial cortex ✓ Familiar faces induce a low skin conductance response	➢ Dysfunction of the right frontal cortex ▪ Impaired expectation violations & plausibility of beliefs	➢ High dopamine levels trigger the symptoms • Patients with Parkinson's disease

Treatment includes:
1. Treatment of the underlying condition
2. Treatment of the associated psychotic symptoms.
3. Agents like Quetiapine, Clozapine, and Pimavanserin are preferred in CS with DLB

Prognosis

Psychotic Disorders	Neurodegenerative Disorders	Affective Disorders
• More persistent • Relapse of psychosis leads to the return of delusional symptoms	• Can be Persistent • Up to 15%-28 % resolution	• Better prognosis • Remission of mood symptoms may lead to resolution of CS.

Hospital Course



Matricide

Offenders

- ➢ Commonly young male
- ➢ Age usually 21 to 48 years, with a mean of 36.5
- ➢ Single, intense relationship with mother, absent father figure
- ➢ The most common psychiatric disorders are schizophrenia and a psychotic disorder

Victims

- ➢ Age 60-70 with a mean of 62.3 years
- ➢ A study showed 6.2% with a psychiatric disorder

Theory	Explanation
Psychanalytic	Oedipal sexual conflict leads to a sense of guilt and an impulse to sexually possess the mother Pre-oedipal excessive attachment to mother with a dependency relationship that threatens the offender's identity
Family System Theory	Abusive and pathological family structure that offenders find unbearable
Cognitive Behavioral Concepts	Irrational/ psychotic thought processes to overcome feelings of inadequacy and worthlessness
Self-affirmation Theory	The need of the threatened person to affirm self-image or to uphold it as good and just