ELSEVIER

Parkinsonism and Related Disorders 12 (2006) 392–395

Parkinsonism & Related Disorders

www.elsevier.com/locate/parkreldis

Case report

Hypersexuality and paraphilia induced by selegiline in Parkinson's disease: Report of 2 cases

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Received 5 December 2005; received in revised form 19 January 2006; accepted 21 January 2006

Abstract

While hypersexuality and paraphilia are known side effects of anti-Parkinson medications, it is seldom reported. Furthermore, selegiline is rarely implicated in such behaviors. We report two cases of early onset PD who experienced paraphilia and hypersexuality when selegiline was initiated, and later developing obsessive–compulsive and punding behavior with the addition of dopamine agonists. Social repercussions may prohibit patients and/or their families from volunteering such information.

Keywords: Parkinson; Paraphilia; Selegiline; Hypersexuality; Punding; Dopamine agonists

1. Introduction

An increase in sexual interest and/or libido related to antiparkinsonian therapy has been well described [1–3]. Less frequent and less well-reported are occurrences of sexual deviancy in conjunction with antiparkinsonian medications. Such incidences include states of hypersexuality [1], transvestic fetishism [4], zoophilia [5,6] and internet pornography [7]. Marital infidelity has also been reported [7]. Reported cases indicate that a reduction or change in antiparkinsonian medication may result in diminished or at least partial improvement in abnormal sexual behavior [2,4–6]. We report two cases of aberrant sexual behavior which appears to have arisen de novo in conjunction with selegiline therapy.

2. Case reports

2.1. Case 1

A 29-year-old man began having cramping of his right hand at the age of 26. He later noticed increased slowness, stiffness, and tremor of his right hand. He was diagnosed with young-onset Parkinson's disease (PD) and was treated initially with selegiline. Within 2 months of initiation of his medication, he began engaging in cross-dressing behavior. His wife had been aware of this behavior (but no one else), and it strained their marriage. He expressed shame and embarrassment, but claimed to not be able to control himself, and could not provide a reason for the behavior. He had no premorbid history of cross-dressing.

Although not admitting to a cross-dressing behavior on regular follow-up visits, he discussed personality changes and mood swings. As a result, selegiline was discontinued after 3 months and replaced with ropinirole up to 3 mg 4 times per day. His cross-dressing fetish persisted while on ropinirole. At 12 mg/day of ropinirole, he experienced

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doi:10.1016/j.parkreldis.2006.01.010

persistent nausea and vomiting, and a year ago was switched to pramipexole 0.75 mg 4 times per day. Six months ago, levodopa was added to the regimen.

A few months after starting pramipexole, the patient first noted obsessive–compulsive behavior, beginning with excessive weeding in the yard. Subsequently, he engaged in excessive viewing of internet pornography, and increased his frequency of trips to adult movie stores. He also reported excessive obsessions with playing video games and weeding the yard. He reported an increase in his gambling behavior—whereas he had rarely gambled before his diagnosis, he had begun gambling monthly. He stated his gambling was not as much a concern to him as were his other compulsive tendencies. He reported spending 4–6 h/day on Playstation, and at least 2 h each day browsing internet pornography. He reported that these behaviors "consumed his life." He retained insight, realizing these behaviors were "unhealthy." In addition, the cross-dressing behavior persisted when the patient switched from selegiline to ropinirole and then to pramipexole, while at the same time developing other obsessive–compulsive tendencies. It was at this point that the patient agreed to an interview and consented to a Mini-Mental State Exam and neuropsychological evaluation.

His past medical history is significant only for depression. After his initial PD diagnosis, the patient had felt depressed with decreased energy, excessive daytime sleepiness, and with markedly decreased motivation. However, the patient consistently denied depression at subsequent doctor visits.

On examination, he was alert, fully oriented and exhibited appropriate affect. He scored a 30/30 on the Mini Mental State Examination. The Unified Parkinson Disease Rating Scale (UPDRS) motor scale score in the "on" state was 11. He exhibited mild hypomimia, with a slight resting tremor of the right hand. He also had mild rigidity and bradykinesia of the right upper and lower extremities. No dyskinesias were noted.

On neuropsychological assessments, he scored: 12 (out of a possible 54) on the Hamilton Depression Scale; 15 (out of a possible 56) on the Hamilton Anxiety Scale; 8 (out of a possible 20) on the Obsession Subtotal and 12 (out of a possible 20) on the Compulsion Subtotal of the Yale-Brown Obsessive Compulsive Scale; 11 (out of a possible 40) on the Mania Rating Scale. These suggest that he had mild depression and anxiety, and moderate obsessive compulsive symptoms. Cognitively, his attention, executive function, language, memory, and visual-spatial orientation were within normal limits for his age.

2.2. Case 2

A 51-year-old man presented with tremor in the right upper extremity in 1997. Six months later, he was seen by a movement disorders specialist and diagnosed with PD. Slight rigidity and bradykinesia were identified and selegiline at 5 mg twice a day was initiated. A year following diagnosis, he was initiated onto Mirapex (1.25 mg three times a day), later increased to and maintained at 1.5 mg three times per day.

Shortly after initiating selegiline, but prior to the initiation of pramipexole, he developed an unhealthy obsession with internet pornography. He admitted to looking at pornographic websites for 1 h/day, 4–5 days a week. He also reported increased sex drive and to having multiple affairs with colleagues at work. The patient and his wife have received counseling for the issue. He could not "explain where these behaviors came from." He claimed "the thought of going outside his marriage never occurred to him" before he began taking anti-PD medications. The patient has not tried to taper or discontinue the use of any of his anti-PD medications. In addition, he reported other compulsive behaviors since initiating pramipexole. He noted that he has picked up playing a woodwind instrument for the last 4 years, and has been playing golf for the past three. He noted that playing golf has become "like an addiction," and he usually practices playing the instrument for 2 h each night. He did not report an increased urge to gamble. His increased sexual urges and preoccupation with internet pornography have persisted with the addition of pramipexole. Other medications included: buproprion 100 mg twice a day and trazadone 200 mg at bedtime.

The patient was contacted at random to participate in a study on compulsive behaviors in PD. It was while participating in this study that the patient admitted to the aforementioned behaviors and consented to a Mini-Mental State Exam and neuropsychological examination.

On examination, he was alert, fully oriented with appropriate affect. He scored a 30/30 on the Mini Mental State Exam. He scored an 8 on the UPDRS motor scale in the "on" state. He exhibited mild hypomimia, no resting tremor, but moderate rigidity and bradykinesia in the right and mild rigidity and bradykinesia in the left upper extremity. No dyskinesia or dystonia was noted.

On neuropsychological assessments, he scored: 7 (out of a possible 54) on the Hamilton Depression Scale; 6 (out of a possible 56) on the Hamilton Anxiety Scale; 9 (out of a possible 20) on the Obsession Subtotal and 6 (out of a possible 20) on the Compulsion Subtotal of the Yale-Brown Obsessive Compulsive Scale; 8 (out of a possible 40) on the Mania Rating Scale. These suggest that he had mild anxiety and depression, and mild obsessive compulsive symptoms. Cognitively, his scores were within normal range for his age in attention, executive function, memory, language, and visual-spatial skills.