

Assessing HRV, SCR, and IGR under treatment with psychotropic drugs, one can objectify autonomic dysfunction caused by side effects. Maybe, this non-invasive biomonitoring will become a helpful diagnostic tool in the treatment of patients.

FC06.06

DECREASED SEROTONIN 5-HT_{2A} BINDING POTENTIAL IN PATIENTS WITH ANOREXIA NERVOSA

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Background: Indirect evidence through challenge tests has shown decreased serotonergic function in anorexia patients. Neuroimaging techniques offer the possibility to investigate in vivo functional characteristics of the serotonergic system.

Methods: In this study the 5-HT_{2a} receptor of 21 patients with eating disorders (8 anorexia nervosa restricting type, 9 anorexia nervosa purging type and 4 bulimia nervosa purging type; free of psychotropics except for benzodiazepines) was studied by means of the radio-iodinated 5-HT_{2a} receptor antagonist 4-amino-N-[1-[3-(4-fluorophenoxy)propyl]-4-methyl-4-piperidinyl]-5-iodo-2-methoxybenzamide (123I-5-I-R91150). 10 age-matched healthy controls were included. All received an intravenous injection of 185 MBq/70 kg 123I-5-I-R91150 and were scanned with brain Single Photon Emission Computed Tomography (SPECT). Stereotactically realigned images were analysed semi-quantitatively using predefined volumes-of-interest. Serotonin binding capacity was expressed as ratio of specific to non-specific activity. The cerebellum was used as a measure of non-specific activity.

Results: Significant reductions in left frontal binding potential were found in the anorectic group ($p = 0.04$), but not in the bulimia subgroup. In the anorectic group, a significant frontal asymmetry was present with decreases on the left side (frontal lobe ratio R/L = 1.05, $p = 0.001$), most prominent high-frontal and in the subgroup with purging behavior. The left parietal cortex had a significant lower binding potential for the anorectic group ($p = 0.02$).

Interpretation: Brain SPECT of 5-HT_{2a} serotonin receptor system in anorexia patients shows evidence of decreased and asymmetric frontal binding potential of the 5-HT_{2a} receptor, indicating a decrease in number and/or in binding affinity of 5-HT_{2a} receptors.

DE02. Has dynamic psychiatry a future?

Chair: A.W. Clare (IR)

DE02.01

HAS DYNAMIC PSYCHIATRY A FUTURE?

Pro: A.A. Dahl, *Contra:* D. Goldberg

No abstract was available at the time of printing.

SES10. AEP Section "Epidemiology and Social Psychiatry": Dementia and its care in Europe

Chairs: A. Mann (UK), S. Weyerer (D)

SES10.01

EPIDEMOLOGY OF DEMENTIA AND COGNITIVE IMPAIRMENT: RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

C. Brayne

No abstract was available at the time of printing.

SES10.02

EUROCARE: A CROSS-NATIONAL STUDY OF CO-RESIDENT SPOUSE CARERS FOR PEOPLE WITH ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

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Background: While there are positive as well as negative elements to the caring role, carers are at high risk of psychological distress and the comprehensive cost of caring has social, economic and health based elements. Co-resident carers, especially spouses, are of primary importance in maintaining people with dementia in their own homes in the community rather than in institutional settings which may be both more costly and have greater environmental poverty. There have, however, been few studies investigating factors associated with carer strain between different countries. We therefore carried out a study aimed at producing a cross national profile of co-resident spouse carers across the EU incorporating quantitative and qualitative elements.

Design: 20 co-resident spouse carers of people with probable AD were recruited from service contacts in each of fourteen out of the fifteen counties of the EU. All completed a semi-structured interview which included: socio-demographic data; health and social service use; the Carer Burden Inventory (CBI); the General Health Questionnaire-12 (GHQ-12); and open ended qualitative questions about the experience of caring.

Results: 280 couples were recruited. There was marked variation in all variables of interest between countries, but consistently high ratings of carer burden (mean CBI scores between 28 and 52) and psychological distress (between 40% and 75% scoring 4 or more on the GHQ-12). Using multivariate analyses to estimate the individual associations of variables of interest with carer strain, controlling for the effects of all other variables in the model: 11.4% ($p = 0.003$) of the variance was accounted for by between country variation; 4.9% ($p < 0.001$) by expressed financial dissatisfaction; 4.5% ($p = 0.001$) by lower carer age; 3.2% ($p = 0.004$) by difficulties with spouse behavioural deficits; and 2.0% ($p = 0.024$) by perceived negative social reactions. Overall, the most commonly expressed difficulties reflected: loss of companionship and reciprocity, and deterioration in their partners' social behaviour. Satisfaction from caring stemmed from: a feeling of job satisfaction; continued reciprocity and mutual affection; companionship; and the fulfilment of a sense of duty.

Conclusions: This study confirms the high level of burden and mental distress in spouse carers for people with Alzheimer's Disease in the EU. These data suggest avenues for the primary and secondary prevention of burden by addressing clinical issues (eg