
Video news

Videotape reviews

Clozapine: a carer's perspective

It is very encouraging that a drugs manufacturer has at last provided information to both users and carers in a readily digestible form, particularly when considering the complications of many anti-psychotic medications. However, the video lasted only seven minutes and I feel would benefit by being extended to a full ten minutes.

Of the many good points raised, I think two are most important. First, the emphasis on the various safeguards which are applied to prevent Clozapine being used where there is any danger of particularly nasty side-effects such as neutropenia, and second, the recommendation that users and carers be put in touch with one another to share experiences, and hopefully provide a mutual encouragement. Perhaps there should be a users' register to promote this.

On the downside, the video clearly states that benefits may take up to a year to show, and this I feel could be misleading as I am aware of patients who have taken well over 12 months to demonstrate any substantial improvement.

More time could be given to the matter of weight gain. In my daughter's case she moved quite rapidly to size 16, and apart from the cost of constantly having to change her wardrobe, the emotional stress and embarrassment this produced was considerable. Perhaps advice on combating this problem should be included.

Drizzling, particularly heavily during sleep, can also prove embarrassing, and again helpful advice on this could be included.

No mention is made of the menstrual changes that the drug can produce, and I feel it is important that females are made aware of this. My daughter's first period after many years came as quite a shock.

Perhaps if this video was issued in conjunction with the Information Sheet produced by the National Schizophrenia Fellowship rather than the manufacturer's notes, there would be a better understanding among both the professionals and the laity. Nevertheless this manufacturer should be encouraged to continue to provide information in such an open way, and it is to be hoped that others will soon follow such initiative.

MIKE O'DOUGAN

Understanding treatment with clozapine: a clinician's perspective

Clozapine is the Lazarus of antipsychotics; consigned to a commercial grave because of its high incidence of neutropenia, it was resurrected by the trial conducted by John Kane and colleagues in 1988 which showed it was of value in treatment-resistant schizophrenia. Since that trial it has become a useful member of the psychiatric armamentarium, although it has some clear limitations and is certainly not a wonder cure for schizophrenia. Clozapine causes less extra-pyramidal and motor side-effects than conventional antipsychotics. Other side-effects of clozapine are less commonly found with other antipsychotics and include unpleasant phenomena such as hyper-salivation. The neutropenic reaction remains however the most important in that it is potentially life threatening and necessitates regular blood monitoring.

This video is aimed at patients being treated with clozapine, their carers and families. Its stated purpose is to enable more informed consent about the appropriateness of treatment with clozapine and to aid better understanding of what treatment can involve and to emphasise the vital importance of blood monitoring as part of therapy. It is a reasonably professionally made video which is quite clear. It is also brief, being only seven minutes long. It is clearly stated that this video programme is intended to complement other information given by the care team and not intended to substitute for this. This should of course be borne in mind when using it. Although not entirely inappropriate, there is an atmosphere throughout the video faintly reminiscent of that of a drug promotional advertisement.

There are two points of concern in the content of the video. One is that it does rather tend to minimise the incidence of the neutropenic side-effects. The percentage figure quoted in the video (3%) was described as "a small number". This does represent a very appreciable risk and should not be minimised. However, it is also well explained in the video that blood counts would be monitored and the treatment would be discontinued if necessary (although the voice-over says this in somewhat regretful tones). Although this video is focused on clozapine, care should be used by clinicians that clozapine is not seen as a last resort treatment for schizophrenia. There are some antipsychotics currently clinically available

(for example, risperidone) which share some of the pharmacological characteristics of clozapine and increasingly new antipsychotics will be becoming available for clinical use, some of which may share clozapine's beneficial effects without the neutropenic side-effects. This video is provided free of charge by Sandoz as a medical education service to psychiatrists.

ALAN YOUNG

Violence in the NHS

This video, produced by Sue Kilroe, Senior Lecturer in Nursing at Leeds Polytechnic, and Dr Ron Wiener, Community Psychologist and Part-time Lecturer at the University of Leeds, is part of a package, including teaching notes, to address a variety of staff about violent situations in the health service. The production itself is somewhat amateurish, with rather stilted situations and over-acting from Leeds Drama Workshop. Some of the actors seem more intent on acting out their own fantasies about hospital situations than delineating the situations properly. That said, the video portrays 33 different situations in a variety of hospital settings, both general hospital, psychiatric hospital and accident and emergency departments. It shows incidents in which staff are aggressive to patients, both verbally and physically, and situations in which patients are aggressive to staff. The video particularly outlines bad practice where inappropriate activity or inactivity on behalf of staff actually produces a violent incident which the staff member then finds difficult to handle. Clearly some of the difficult incidents are themselves produced by a shortage of staffing.

Although, as already indicated, the production of the video is rather amateur, it does provide a useful selection of incidents which could be used as discussion points in a workshop situation in talking about violent incidents and ways of handling them. At present to my knowledge there are no other videos available that do this.

Overall, I think the video is useful in the absence of a better one and I will certainly be looking to purchase it for our own service where I think it is something we could use for discussion with nursing staff, particularly health care assistants, and with other non-professionally trained care staff.

MICHAEL J. HARRIS

Carl Gustav Jung: matter of heart

The double meaning of this title draws attention to the Jungian triple critique of conventional

psychology and psychoanalysis, expressed in this film in an interview with Jung's close associate, Marie-Louise von Franz. She regrets the neglect of 'the feminine'; the downgrading of material reality - 'matter' - in comparison with ideas; and avoidance of the problem of evil. This immediately puts the viewer into a time warp, taking us back to Jung's pre-first world war break with Freud, since all three aspects have in fact been tackled by post-Freudian psychoanalysts: among others, Chodorow, Mitchell and Benjamin have created a feminist psychoanalysis; Erikson, Fromm and Bowlby have introduced social awareness into psychoanalysis; and the Kleinians have anatomised the inherent destructiveness and envy of human infants.

But this is not a video to be approached in a critical or academic frame of mind. It is a collage of fascinating archive clips of Jung talking (including John Freeman's famous Face to Face interview), home movies, and interviews with prominent members of the Zurich circle who worked with and revered him. Jung's boyish enthusiasm and good looks, his creativity (he is shown making sandcastles by the lake, doing stone carvings, and, meditatively, 'jus' sittin''), his common touch with his farming neighbours, come across just as strongly as the image of the sage. He really does appear to have been a truly balanced man, his white coat (priestly garb) and his carpenter's apron equally evident.

But this is unashamed hagiography. Jung is throughout presented as a prophet, a hero who is beyond real criticism. His foibles are indulgently remembered, and although an attempt is made to explore his relationship with Toni Wolff, the extraordinary patient who became his lover, Jung is given the great man's exoneration: genius has its ways which it is not for mere mortals to question.

One cannot watch this film without reflecting how psychoanalysis and psychotherapy contain elements of secularised religion. Phrases such as 'entering the collective' (i.e. collective unconscious) and a reiteration of the central importance of Alchemy (the Jungian counterpart to the crucifixion, nowhere explained, but being a shorthand for the transformation of the self that can occur through psychotherapy) become almost liturgical as the film progresses. There is, to me, a frightening certainty about the way these ideas are presented, especially among Jung's disciples. These are the men and women - mostly women - who *know*. Prince Charles' mentor Laurence Van de Post is particularly dogmatic and messianic. This is a pity, because there is surely a genuine debate to be had about the spiritual vacuum of modern life, and the role that psychoanalysis, psychotherapy, and even psychiatry can play in helping to understand or even fill it, but this tablet of celluloid from the foothills

of the Swiss alps will contribute little to those who are not already converted.

JEREMY HOLMES

Tape details

Clozaril

Production: Sandoz Pharmaceuticals (UK) Ltd., Frimley Business Park, Frimley, Camberley, Surrey GU16 5SG. 1993.

Distributor: Sandoz Pharmaceuticals (UK) Ltd., Camberley, Surrey GU16 5SG

Details: Free

Audience: Multidisciplinary

Violence in the NHS

Production: Audio Visual Service, University of Leeds.

Distributor: Concord Video & Film Council Ltd., 201 Felixstowe Road, Ipswich, Suffolk IP3 9BJ
Details: £47; sale (accompanying booklet £3). 1992

Audience: Multidisciplinary

Carl Gustav Jung: Matter of Heart

Production/distribution: Odyssey Video, 15 Dufors Place, London W1V 1FE

Details: £14.99 (sale)

Audience: Multidisciplinary

Perinatal Psychiatry

Use and misuse of the Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale

Edited by John Cox & Jeni Holden

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