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EKBOM SYNDROME - CULTURAL ASPECTS FROM A CLINICAL CASE

M. Olari¹, G. Le Vacon², M. Follet²

¹Psychiatry, Hopital Psychiatrique de Rouvray, Rouen, ²Emergency Psychiatry, Hopital Psychiatrique de Rouvray, Sotteville-les-Rouen, France

Introduction: Ekbom syndrome is a delusional parasitosis in which the patient has the delusion of infestation by parasites. This condition might occur in concordance with senile dementia or cerebrovascular disease, but it is also present in mood disorders or schizophrenia.

Objectives: To present a clinical description of a delusional parasitosis that appeared in a young nigerian women after she immigrated in France.

Aims: Our case is suggestive for showing that delusional parasitosis might develop in circumstances of social vulnerability such as the immigration and might have different cultural aspects.

Methods: We present the case of a 29 years old nigerian women that developed a delusional parasitosis 3 years after her arrival in France. The diagnosis was based on a carefully detailed clinical history, an MMSE was also applied. In order to exclude secondary causes an extensive laboratory evaluation was performed including: complete blood cell count, liver, renal and thyroid function tests, serum electrolytes and glucose levels, vitamin B12, folate, iron studies, coproanalysis, neuroimaging.

Results: The patient had all laboratory and neuroimaging tests normal. She presented a delusional parasitosis and she described an infestation with multiple intestinal worms. She was capable of describing them and their movements under the skin and also in all the organs. She described dracunculiasis and three more different species that are commonly present in Nigeria, she never mentioned lice or mites.

Conclusions: Ekbom syndrome is a delusion of hallucinatory mechanism that might have different cultural presentations and could be favored by social vulnerability such as immigration.