

Gilles De La Tourette Syndrome: A Case and A Brief Review of the Early Documentation of the Syndrome in The Literature

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Abstract

Background: Gilles de la Tourette syndrome is a neuro-psychiatric condition associated with rather bizarre manifestations and generally affects children with normal intelligence. The condition has the potential to make an intelligent child a victim of the disorder, and unfavorably affects his/her school performance and lead to social rejection and isolation. Awareness by the community, educators, and also medical practitioners is useful and help in avoiding the loss of such children who have the potential to be a talented person. The aim of this paper is to present a case and to provide a brief account on the early documentation of syndrome in the literature.

Patients and Methods: The case of a ten-year old boy with Gilles de la Tourette syndrome is described and the relevant literatures were reviewed to outline the early documentation of the disorder in the literature.

Results: A.Y was first seen at the pediatric psychiatric clinic of the Children Teaching Hospital of Baghdad Medical City at the age of ten years because they were saying at school that the boy is crazy because of his abnormal behaviors. The boy's abnormal behaviors mentioned by his mother included shrugging his shoulders, shrugging his hips with unusual movements of the legs as if he was dancing, unusual facial grimace and lip licking, rubbing his chin, licking the back of his hand, producing abnormal sounds from his throat, and echolalia.

Review of the earliest relevant literature revealed that the condition was first described in a book entitled "Malleus Maleficarum" which means "Witch's hammer". Jean Marc Gaspard Itard, a French doctor described the first case of Tourette syndrome in 1825.

Conclusion: Awareness of this condition by the community, educators, and also medical practitioners is useful and help in avoiding the loss of such children who have the potential to be a talented person.

Keywords: Awareness, Early documentation, Gilles de la Tourette syndrome, Literature.

Introduction

Gilles de la Tourette syndrome is a pediatric neuro-psychiatric condition generally affecting children with normal intelligence, and may affect also talented children. The rather bizarre manifestations of the syndrome including involuntary movements and utterances may make an intelligent child a victim of the disorder, and unfavorably affects his/her school performance and lead to social rejection and isolation. Awareness of this condition by the community, educators, and also medical practitioners is useful and help in avoiding the loss of such children who have the potential to be talented persons [1, 2]. The aim of this paper is to present a case and to provide a brief account on the early documentation of syndrome in the literature.

Patients and Methods

The case of a ten-year old boy with Gilles de la Tourette syndrome is described and the relevant literatures were reviewed to outline the early documentation of the disorder in the literature.

Results

A.Y was first seen at the pediatric psychiatric clinic of the Children Teaching Hospital of Baghdad Medical City at the age of ten years because they were saying at school that the boy is crazy because of his abnormal behaviors. The parents were unrelated. The father was a forty-year old porter, and his education was limited to finishing fifth grade of primary school. The mother aged thirty and her education was limited to finishing third grade of intermediate school. The boy had an older healthy sister aged fifteen years and an older healthy brother aged thirteen, they were studying at third grade and first grade of intermediate school respectively.

During the years 1884, 1885, and 1889, Georges Gilles de la Tourette (Figure-4), [Gilles de la Tourette. Arch, de Neur, 1884; Gilles de la Tourette. Arch, de Neur, 1885; Gilles de la Tourette. Semaine Medicale, 1889] described nine patients having sporadic condition *Maladie des tics convulsifs*.”



Figure 4: Georges Albert Édouard Brutus Gilles de la Tourette (1857-1904), a French physician and neurologist

Jean-Martin Charcot (Figure-5), a French neurologist and professor trained Gilles de la Tourette. He called the condition Tourette syndrome after his resident, Georges Gilles de la Tourette and suggested that a new clinical category should be defined [1, 3].



Figure 5: Jean-Martin Charcot (1825-1893), a French neurologist

In fact, Jean-Martin Charcot who was influential French physician assigned himself his resident Georges Albert Édouard Brutus Gilles de la Tourette, the duty of studying the patients at the Hospital universities Pitié-Salpêtrière. Their aim was to define the condition and make it distinctive from hysteria and from chorea [1, 3].

One of the patients described by Gilles de la Tourette’s description was a seven-year old child who exhibited a series of tics. The twitches were initially confined to the facial musculature with later appearance of vocal tics as expiratory laryngeal noises such as hems and ahs and gradually the abnormal movements involved the shoulders and arms.

Gilles de la Tourette emphasized that the manifestation of the disorder may be limited to abnormal facial movements for several months or years before the development of the inarticulate laryngeal sounds [1-3].

In 1968, Arthur K Shapiro, treated a patient having Gilles de la Tourette syndrome with haloperidol, and published a paper criticizing the psychoanalytic approach. The contributions of Shapiro improved the understanding of the syndrome, and completely changed the prevailing view of the condition [4].

Discussion

Children with Gilles de la Tourette syndrome can be faster than the average for their age group on timed tests of motor coordination. Tim Howard authored a book with Ali Benjamin entitled “The Keeper: A Life of saving goals and achieving them”. He described his career and his life with Gilles de la Tourette syndrome. Howard thought that his neurological structure gave him an enhanced perception and ability to hyper-focus that contributed to his success on the field of football.

Conclusion

Awareness of this condition by the community, educators, and also medical practitioners is useful and help in avoiding the loss of such children who have the potential to be a talented person.

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2. Some of the sketches were included in some of the author’s publications, but the author has their copyright.

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