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Review Article

Capgras Syndrome

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ABSTRACT

Capgras Syndrome (CS) is a rare delusional misidentification syndrome (DMS) characterized by the irrational belief that a familiar person, such as a spouse or parent, has been replaced by an identical-looking impostor. First described by Jean Marie Joseph Capgras in 1923, the condition involves a disconnection between visual recognition and emotional response, often resulting from organic brain injuries, neurodegenerative diseases like Alzheimer's, or psychiatric conditions such as Schizophrenia. Etiological theories range from psychodynamic conflicts (Oedipus/Electra complexes) to neurological dysfunction in the right hemisphere. Clinical manifestations include anxiety, hallucinations, and social withdrawal. Management requires a multimodal approach, combining pharmacotherapy (antipsychotics and SSRIs) with behavioral psychotherapy techniques that emphasize emotional connection and reality validation rather than direct confrontation of the delusion.

KEYWORDS

• Capgras Syndrome • Delusional Misidentification Syndrome (DMS) • Impostor Delusion • Prosopagnosia • Neuropsychiatry • Psychotherapy • Antipsychotics

INTRODUCTION

Capgras delusion or Capgras syndrome (CS) is a psychiatric disorder in which a person holds a delusion that a friend, spouse, parent, other close family member, or pet has been replaced by an identical impostor.

It's named by the French psychiatric jean Maria Joseph Capgras, who described the first case in 1923.

Capgras syndrome is classified as delusional misidentification syndrome known as DMS or DMI.

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DEFINITION

In this syndrome in which a person holds a delusion that a friend, parents or spouse or any family members has been replaced by an identical looking impostor, despite recognition of familiarity of their behavior and appearance.

It may occur as a part or along with other disease conditions such as schizophrenia or other neurological disorders.

For Example:

- The brain injured patient's mother came to see him, he exclaimed, "Who is this woman? She looks just like my mother, but she's an impostor! She's some other woman pretending to be my mother.

Etiology

- Psychoanalytical View - Result of an Oedipus **(a male child develops unconscious sexual attraction towards his mother)** or Electra complex **(attraction towards father)**. So, people with the sexual desire try to resolve their guilt about these circumstances by identifying them as imposter.
- Psychodynamic Theories - Capgras syndrome has occur with repressed feelings (such as anger, hatred, jealously, or guilt).
- Many researchers think that result of an organic cause Such as epilepsy or Alzheimer's disease.
- May be organic cause leads to breakdown of communication happening between the part of the brain that processes the visual information and the part that controls the limbic systems of emotional response.
- This syndrome mostly occurs for the peoples after brain injury or trauma, causes cerebral lesions. signs of atrophy or cerebral dysfunction affected the posterior areas of right hemisphere where face recognition is performed as a result of Capgras.

Specific Features

- He or she recognizes that a person or place is exactly like the real one but emotionally insist it is not
- It may extend to animals or object.
- The imposter always is a person or place with which the patient is familiar not a strange or a new one.
- The patient is conscious of their abnormalities; there is no delusion.

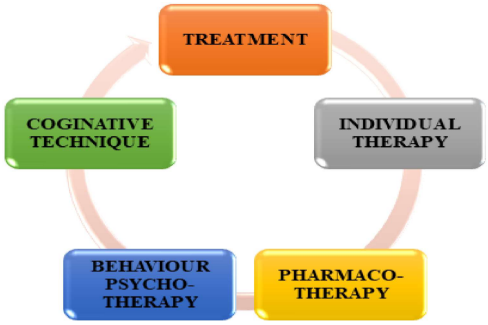
Associated Features

- Although this syndrome usually occurs with Schizophrenic disease condition but also in affective and organic psychic disturbances
- Specific features of delusions of doubles may present with significant dangerous behavior.

Psychiatric manifestations

1. Fatigue
2. Decrease Memory
3. Hallucination
4. Irritability
5. Anxiety
6. Confusion
7. Ataxic gait
8. Insomnia
9. Suspiciousness
10. Hearing multiple female voices
11. Depression
12. Slow cerebration
13. Social withdrawal

TREATMENT



Pharmacotherapy

- SSRI (Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors) at starting dose: They increase the level of **serotonin** in the brain, which helps improve mood and reduce anxiety. For **Example:** Fluoxetine, Sertraline, Escitalopram, Paroxetine, Citalopram
- **Antipsychotic:** They block dopamine receptors in the brain, which helps reduce hallucinations and delusions. **For Example:** Haloperidol, Pimozide**,** Risperidone, Clozapine**,** Olanzapine.

Behaviour Psychotherapy

- Behaviour psychotherapy is a type of treatment that helps to change unhealthy or negative behaviours through learning techniques. It is based on the idea that behaviour is learned and can be changed.
- For treating delusions that is based on persistent gentle discussions about evidence for the belief, help to overcome the problem the person has believing this substitution delusion with the available evidences.
- Three core concepts found within rehabilitation therapy can be useful in dealing with Capgras syndrome (Moore 2009), they are

1. Enter into reality of the person, Acknowledge their feelings,
2. Never argue or correct, Get and stay emotionally connected
3. Focus on creating positive emotional challenging Send the imposter away experiences to address behaviors.

CONCLUSION

Capgras Syndrome represents a profound disruption of the bond between recognition and emotion. Whether rooted in psychodynamic conflicts or organic neurological impairment in the right hemisphere, the disorder poses a unique challenge to both patients and their families. While the clinical manifestation believing a loved one is an "impostor" can lead to significant distress and withdrawal, a combination of targeted pharmacotherapy and empathetic, non-confrontational behavioral therapy offers a path toward stabilization. Ultimately, understanding CS as a bridge between psychiatric and neurological science is essential for providing effective, compassionate care.

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