Organic Mental Disorder

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Definition

- It has been defined as disorder for which there is an identifiable pathologic condition. Such as brain tumor, cerebrovascular disease.

- Psychiatric diseases, such as schizophrenia, depression, are considered no organic basis, called “functional disorders.”
Now is the time to retire the term "organic mental disorders"

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The organic/nonorganic distinction in contemporary classifications of mental disorders such as DSM-III and DSM-III-R has important prognostic and treatment implications, because it directs the clinician to pay special attention to the possibility of an underlying "physical" disorder as the cause of the mental disturbance. However, the term "organic" raises serious and intractable problems, since the comitatory meaning of the term always returns to its historical roots, which imply an outmoded functional/structural, psychological/biological, and mind/body dualism. The authors present a proposal being considered for DSM-IV that would eliminate the term "organic" and reorganize the classification of organic mental disorders. Disorders previously referred to as "organic mental disorders" would be renamed as either "secondary disorders" (if they are due to "physical" disorders) or "substance-induced disorders." The entire classification of mental disorders would be reorganized to distribute the secondary and substance-induced disorders into the major groups with which they share phenomenology. The traditional organic mental disorders—dementia, delirium, dementia, and amnestic disorder—would be grouped together under the rubric of "cognitive impairment"
But, it is outdated. Every psychiatric disorder has an organic component.

No longer used in DSM-IV, substituted by “……due to a general medical condition”.
“due to a general medical condition”

Means:

a particular psychiatric symptom is probably primarily related to a specific nonpsychiatric disorder which requires its own treatment
Cognitive disorders: delirium, dementia, amnesic disorders

Cognitive impairment is the cardinal symptom
Delirium
Delirium

- Characterized by a disturbance of consciousness and a change in cognition that develop over a short time
- Usually
  - sudden onset
  - a brief and fluctuating course
  - rapid improvement when the causative factor is identified and eliminated
epidemiology

- A common disorder
- 15-25% of patients on general medical wards
- It is a syndrome, it has many causes. Most of them arise outside the CNS, such as in renal or hepatic failure
Etiology

- **CNS diseases**
  - Epilepsy
  - Brain trauma
  - Infections: encephalitis,
  - Vascular disorder
- **Drugs**: insulin, steroids,
  antihypertensive agents,
  et al.
- **Endocrine dysfunction**
- **Poisons**: carbon monoxide
  Heavy metals

- **Diseases of organs**
  - Liver: hepatic
    encephalopathy
  - Lung: hypoxia
  - Cardiovascular disease: cardiac failure

- **Infections with fever and sepsis**
- **Trauma (head or general body)**
- **Postoperative states**
Acetylcholine,

Area: the reticular formation

Decreased acetylcholine activity in the brain
Clinical features

- **Impairment of consciousness**: reduced clarity of awareness of the environment, with reduced ability to focus, sustain, or shift attention

- **Abnormal arousal**: hyperactivity + increased alertness, or hypoactivity + decreased alertness

- **Lost orientation**
Clinical features

- **Language abnormal**: rambling, irrelevant or incoherent speech,
- **Perception**: visual or auditory hallucinations and illusions. With anxiety, fear, drowsiness, insomnia, transient hallucination, nightmares, restless
- **Mood**: anger, rage, fear, euphoria
treatment

- Treat the cause
- Provide physical, sensory and environmental support
- If has psychosis: haloperidol im
- If has insomnia: benzodiazepines
Dementia
Dementia

Characterized by multiple cognitive defects that impairment in memory, without impairment in consciousness.
epidemiology

- A disease of older people
- 5% of >65 severe dementia
- 15% mild dementia
## Disorders that may produce dementia

- Alzheimer disease
- Vascular dementia
  - Multiple infarcts
- Drugs and toxins
- Trauma: head injury
- Neurodegenerative disorder
  - Parkinson’s disorders
  - Huntington’s disease
- Infections
  - AIDS
  - Neurosyphilis, et al.
- Metabolic disorders
  - Cushing’s syndrome
  - Hypothyroidism
  - hyperthyroidism
Clinical features

- **Memory impairment**: early and prominent feature
- **Disorientation to person, place, and time**
- **Personality change**: hostile, explosive, irritable
- **Hallucinations and delusions**: paranoid, 20-30% h AD, 30-40% d
Treatment

- Supportive medical care,
- Emotional support to patient and family
- Pharmacological treatment for specific symptoms
Amnestic disorders
Amnestic disorders

- Characterized by memory impairment in the absence of other significant cognitive impairments.
- Most common found in alcohol use and head injury.
Major causes of amnestic disorders

- **Systemic medical conditions**
  - Thiamine deficiency (Korsakoff’s syndrome)

- **Primary brain conditions**
  - Seizures
  - Head trauma
  - Cerebral tumors
  - Encephalitis
  - Multiple sclerosis, et al.

- **Substance-related causes**
  - Alcohol use disorder
  - Benzodiazepines
Clinical features

- Development of a memory disorder characterized by impairment in the ability to learn new info and recall previously remembered knowledge.
treatment

- Treat the underlying cause
- Supportive psychotherapy
Case study
Two related syndromes

- **Acute brain syndrome**
  - impairment of consciousness acute onset, short duration

- **Chronic brain syndrome**
  - Dementia
  - Amnesic syndrome
  - Personality change
  - Mood disorder, psychotic symptom
  - Atrophy
  - Plaque, tangles
etiology

- Degenerative diseases:
  - Vascular disease
  - Head injury
  - Brain tumor
  - Infection

- Organ disease related with brain:
  - Pulmonary encephalopathy, hepatic encephalopathy

- Endocrine disease: hyperthyroidism, hypo-

- Systematic disease: systematic lupus erythematosus
diagnosis

- History
- Physical exam
- Mental exam
- Lab test
Treatment

- Treat underlying cause
- Treat psychiatric symptoms
Thanks!