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Cognitive-behavioral therapy for PANDAS-related obsessive-compulsive disorder: findings from a preliminary waitlist controlled open trial.

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Abstract

OBJECTIVE: To provide preliminary estimates of the effectiveness of cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) in treating pediatric obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) of the pediatric autoimmune neuropsychiatric disorders associated with streptococcus (PANDAS) subtype.

METHOD: Seven children with OCD of the PANDAS subtype (range 9-13 years) were treated in a 3-week intensive CBT program conducted at a university clinic. Six of seven children were taking selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor medication(s) upon presentation. Assessments were conducted at four time points: baseline, pretreatment approximately 4 weeks later, posttreatment, and 3-month follow-up. Raters were blind to the nature of the study treatment.

RESULTS: Six of seven participants were classified as treatment responders (much or very much improved) at posttreatment, and three of six remained responders at follow-up. Clinician severity ratings, as measured by the Children's Yale-Brown Obsessive-Compulsive Scale and Anxiety Disorder Interview Schedule for DSM-IV Child Interview Schedule-Parent version, decreased significantly following intervention, with effect sizes of 3.38 and 2.29, respectively. Self-reported general anxiety and depression symptoms were not significantly reduced.

CONCLUSIONS: This study provides preliminary support for CBT in treating the PANDAS subtype of pediatric OCD. This approach is also considered a safe and minimally invasive treatment approach.

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