

Experiences with OCD

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by Sujoy Gayen

The following article is written by a young man who experienced a very unusual presentation of OCD symptoms. The cyclical way in which his OC symptoms literally turned on and off depending on the time of the month was particularly curious, and stumped many professionals that he went to. The suggestions made in this article would probably not be appropriate for most OC sufferers, but we wanted to include the article in the newsletter, because it demonstrates first that OC symptoms can present within a context of a variety of other disorders, including medical ones, and second, to encourage people to always investigate different options if they find limited help with their current treatment protocol. As always, NJOCF does not necessarily promote or approve of any particular interventions or treatment protocols described in our articles. It is always best to discuss questions or concerns with your mental health/medical professional.- Allen H. Weg, EdD]

I am 16 year old now and I started suffering from anxiety, obsessive thoughts, and nervousness in the summer of 2002. I was 12, had just finished the sixth grade, and was about to enter middle school. I experienced some very disturbing and harrowing thoughts that made me cry on end, and I would continuously rush to my parents for reassurance. I was not able to do anything; I could not study, carry out normal conversations, or even watch television without choking up. I suffered

like this until February of 2006; by that time I was in the tenth grade. The peculiar thing, however, was that these periods of extreme anxiety and depression came and went in monthly cycles. For four to five weeks, I would be normal, and then all of a sudden, I'd start feeling miserable. I'd feel miserable for about a week. Then my misery would ease. After another four to five weeks, I'd start feeling horrible, and this cycle would continue. No one knew what was causing these cyclical attacks.

In an attempt to improve my condition, my parents took me to several psychologists and psychiatrists. In the fall of 2003, a psychiatrist diagnosed me with obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD). I was prescribed Prozac, Lexapro, Zoloft and Risperdal over the next two years. In addition, I went to two reputed psychiatrists for exposure and response therapy. Nothing worked. During the normal period I would understand the principles of exposure and response therapy very well. But during the episode, I would be too overwhelmed to apply those principles. While the medication and counseling were trying to treat the symptoms, my parents took me to experts in leading medical institutions in New York and Philadelphia

to see if the cause behind my suffering could be identified. No one could explain why the episodes occur in such a cyclic and predictable way. At the end of two years of medications and therapies, I was worse off than where I had started. With my doctor's consent, I was taken off from all the psychiatric medications and I did feel better for a while, but the episodes kept reappearing with due regularity.

My mother all along had the hunch that a physical, not a psychiatric, problem was causing these cyclical attacks. After doing extensive Internet research, she found that a medical institute in Chicago treats OCD, depression, bipolar disorder and autism using dietary supplements, such as, vitamins, minerals and amino acids. They try to find out the source that causes these problems and try to fix the source instead of treating the symptoms. The doctors there believe that many of these ailments result from deficiencies in diet, and reaction to different food items. They specialize in correcting ailments with vitamins and dietary changes. My mother took me to the institute in the summer of 2005. They

ran blood, urine, hair and stool tests on me. Blood results showed that I was zinc deficient, and the stool test showed that I had candida infection in my intestine. Candida is a yeast that thrives in the intestines when people eat too much sugary foods and foods that they're allergic to. If too many harmful foods are eaten, the Candida becomes an insidious fungus that can cause a host of ailments, including mental disorders such as depression and anxiety disorders.

The doctor prescribed vitamin and zinc supplements to be taken daily, as well as, Nystatin and Samento (a Peruvian Herbal medicine) to treat candida. In addition, he advised me to eliminate wheat and milk from my diet. Within two weeks of starting Nystatin and Samento, my skin condition was better, and my next two episodes were much milder. I could go to school and do most of the work, except that I did my work slowly. After two episodes, I was symptom-free for 6 months. During that 6-month period I went through blood, urine and stool tests, and candida infection was no longer existent. My vitamins were modified and Nystatin and Samento were discontinued. Within two months of discontinuing Nystatin and Samento the anxiety and depressive episodes came back in August of 2006. As a result, I was again put on Samento and Nystatin. I got two episodes after that – one in September and another in November. During both of these episodes, I could work and go to school, but it took me much longer to finish any task than the time it would normally take me.

In addition, my mom learned about a psychiatrist who specialized in healing mental diseases by eliminating harmful toxins from one's body. We took an appointment with him in November of 2005. He advised me to eliminate foods containing processed sugars from my diet in addition to the wheat and milk that were already removed. Once I removed these foods from my diet and took the vitamins and candida medications, my condition improved significantly. Currently, my cyclical suffering is less intense, and some months, I don't even experience the attacks. My mom started researching as to why Nystatin and Samento were working better than many psychiatric medications and

therapies that I was given. She found that Samento, the Peruvian herb, is used as an alternative medicine to treat Lyme disease. With that clue, she started reading on Lyme disease and found that Lyme is very difficult to diagnose. Even though my blood work came negative for Lyme two years back, with the help of my primary care physician she sent my blood to a Research lab where they used a more accurate test. Test result came positive for me. Then my mom took me to a Lyme specialist who did further blood work, and the test came out to be positive as well. So, officially I have been diagnosed with OCD, Candida, and Lyme disease. Soon my Lyme treatment will start, and we are all hoping that with that my OCD symptoms will go away.

I am very grateful to my mom for her tireless research that led to a treatment plan that improved my condition. However, my mom had to spend an enormous amount of time to find the institute in Chicago, different psychologists, and the Lyme specialist. It should not be that way; that is why I wanted to write about my experiences in this newsletter so that it can be helpful to others. If you're finding it hard to fight your OCD, I suggest trying other options and that is what we did. I have provided some of the web sites that have more detailed info that were helpful for me. If you need further information you can contact me and my mom at sujoyl@optonline.net .

Relevant WEB sites:

Pfeiffer Institute: <http://www.hriptc.org>

<http://www.thehealingpartnership.org/>

Lyme Disease Association: /