

Ekbom Syndrome: the connection between Psychiatry and Dermatology – case report



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BACKGROUND AND AIMS

Ekbom Syndrome (ES) or Delusional parasitoses (DP) is a rare psychiatric disorder that is characterised by the conviction of being infected with parasites or other living organisms, despite clear evidence of the contrary. It is commonly observed among patients over the age 50 and it is mainly described in presenile women. These patients experience visual and tactile hallucinations (they see and/or feel the bugs). In the *DSM-5* it is classified as a delusional disorder, somatic type. In primary DP, the delusion occurs independently of any medical condition; in secondary DP, the delusions arise in the setting of another major medical conditions, neurological condition or psychiatric disorder such as schizophrenia or affective disorders. Traditionally, it is treated with antipsychotic Pimozide, however, due to its side effects atypical antipsychotics could be considered as alternative option.

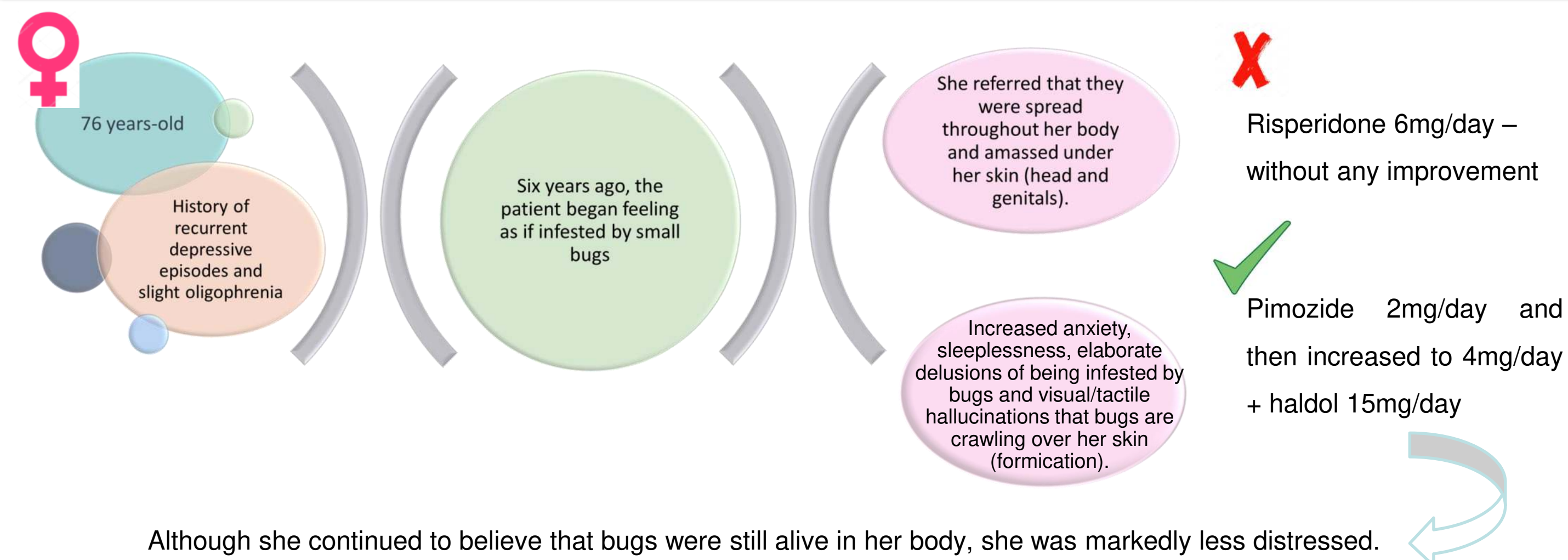
OBJECTIVES

To report a case of Ekbom Syndrome (ES) and an unsystematic review of the literature.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Case report. An unsystematic review was conducted consulting the search engine *Pubmed*® and the keywords: *Ekbom Syndrome* and *Delusional Parasitosis*.

RESULTS



CONCLUSION

ES tends to be under-diagnosed and its diagnostic and treatment are difficult as patients with this disorder reject psychiatric diagnosis and they are convinced of having a dermatological problem.

Traditionally, DP is treated with antipsychotic Pimozide. However, it is associated with extrapyramidal side effects and also can cause prolongation of the QT interval, requiring periodic electrocardiographic monitoring so, usually it is the second choice. Due to these side effects, use of atypical antipsychotics, such as Risperidone, should be considered as first choice. In addition to drug therapy, establishing a therapeutic relationship with the patient is crucial.

Awareness about this syndrome is important to all physicians to get earlier detection and rationalize the treatment.