“The Madness of King George” – A Case Report and Brief Review

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Background and Aims

While rare, **acute neuroporphyrrias are more common among patients diagnosed with a mental illness than in the general population¹**, and can manifest as delirium, depression or even psychosis².
Here we report a case of late-onset psychosis in a patient with suspected neuroporphyria, prompting a literature review on psychiatric manifestations of neuroporphyria.

Clinical Case

A 67 year-old man, with no previous history of psychiatric hospitalizations was admitted in an inpatient psychiatric unit, referring a 2 month history of **grandiose delusions** with **irritable mood**, comorbid with a vesiculous and non-pruriginous facial **rash**. Mental state examination revealed severe psychomotor agitation, flight of ideas and grandiose delusions, without insight.
He began treatment with **valproic acid** and risperidone, under a provisional diagnosis of mania with psychotic symptoms. However, immediately after admission he developed **fever**, lower limb **paresthesia**, and **dark green-colored urine**, raising the possibility of **neuroporphyria**, that was supported by findings of elevated urinary porphobilinogen.
Furthermore, brain imaging (CT, MRI) and cognitive assessment showed no changes. Valproic acid was stopped. After 48 days of treatment with risperidone 6 mg qd the patient was discharged to outpatient care.

Objectives

Describe psychiatric manifestations of neuroporphyria.

Materials and methods

Relevant clinical information was extracted retrospectively from the patient’s clinical record after obtaining informed consent.
A semi-structured literature review on psychiatric manifestations of porphyria was conducted on Pubmed^R.

Literature Review^{3,4,5}

Conclusions

Accurate diagnosis of porphyria presenting with predominantly psychiatric symptoms requires a **high level of suspicion**.
Misdiagnosis may lead to potentially hazardous use of porphyrinogenic drugs, such as valproic acid.

Key-words: Neuroporphyria, Psychosis, Valproic Acid

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