EXFOLIATIVE DERMATITIS DUE TO CARBAMAZEPINE

Sir,

A 57 years, male patient, frequently treated with antipsychotics in past for manic episodes, was kept on carbamazepine maintenance therapy 600 mg per day since three months. Relatives called for emergency home visit with complaints of restlessness. Not sleeping since three days, itching all over body and breathlessness.

On examination there was pilling of skin all over body, multiple bruises and scratches, oedema feet-pitting on pressure, legs like elephants, patient was grasping for air and shouting for distress, enable to seat for a few minutes, had multiple ronchi and rales on respiratory auscultation.

Patient was immediately hospitalized, physician and dermatologist were called.

Other systemic examinations and investigations were inconclusive include Hb, TLC, DLC, Platelet count, Blood Urea, USG Abdomen, X-Ray Chest, fundus.

Provisionally diagnosed as a case of Exfoliative dermatitis

- Anti allergic, anti-histaminics hydroxyzine (Atarax) 75 mg per day was given. Gradually tapered in two months
- Broncho dilators and other symptomatic drugs were given
- Patient was discharged after seven days and was itch free after two months
- Comments: we must be open to accept, diagnose, manage side effects of drugs
- Liaison with other speciality is very rewarding
- Uncommon side effects may be less commonly diagnosed
- In inter episodic periods of bipolar affective disorder psychotherapeutic management may be tried, instead of mood stabilizers for years.

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PREVALENCE OF MENTAL AND BEHAVIOURAL DISORDERS IN INDIA: A META-ANALYSIS

Sir,

Estimation of the magnitude of psychiatric and behavioural disorders is essential for planning the implementation of National Mental Health Programme in India. Lack of a comprehensive nationwide data on these problems have led to a long felt need for a metaanalysis on the magnitude of these problems in the subcontinent. The present article by Reddy and Chandrasekhar (1998) has fulfilled this lacunae.

Metaanalysis gives the summary of several studies having similarity in terms of selected methodological and analytical criteria (Cook et al., 1995). However, the problem of potential bias in such type of study should be kept in mind before accepting the final results.

The studies selected for the meta-analysis had the inclusion criteria of a house to house survey. In absence of properly selected study population based on scientifically valid sampling techniques as reported in few of the selected studies (Elnagar et al., 1971; Nandi et al., 1975; Nandi et al., 1977; Nandi et al., 1980a; Nandi et al., 1980b).

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