

## A Case Report on Somatoform Disorder

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### ABSTRACT

A somatoform disorder includes a group of psychiatric disorder in which patients are characterized by unexplained physical symptoms. Despite of physician reassurance that the symptoms have no physical basis, patient's persistently requests medical disorder. This disorder has no demonstrable organic etiology or physiologic mechanisms. Treatment success is improved by interacting with patient and discussing the possibilities of a somatoform disorder in early stage this will help in eliminating the unnecessary diagnostic and medical treatment. In this case, the patient primarily presented with the multiple somatic complaints, increased fatigability and headache.

**Keywords:** Somatoform disorder, unexplained physical symptoms, fatigability, multiple somatic symptoms.

### INTRODUCTION

Somatoform disorder otherwise called somatization disorder or somatic symptom disorder. It is characterized by the psychiatric symptoms that recommends a physical disorder. The symptoms are involuntary or not in conscious control (1). This disorder entails somatization disorder(which includes multisystem physical symptoms), undifferentiated somatization disorder(less symptoms than somatization disorder),conversion disorder(symptoms of voluntary or sensory function),pain disorder(strong physiological involvement with pain),hypochondriasis(fear of having a life-physical defect),body dysmorphic disorder(preoccupation with a real or imagined physical defect)(1).Primary care patients present with physical symptoms which cannot be illustrated by a general medical condition is about 50 percent and some patients meet criteria for somatoform disorder(2,3). The information known about the etiology of somatoform disorder is very limited and the limited epidemiological data recommends or suggests that familial aggregation (1). To assist the diagnosis of somatoform, disorder some clinical diagnostic tools have been used (4). Patient health questionnaire (PHQ) is the one of the screening tools for psychiatric disorder that is used in primary care settings (5). Cognitive behavioral therapy is one of the effective treatments used in the somatoform disorder (6).

### Case Report

A male patient of 48 year was admitted in the psychiatry ward with the chief complaints of

multiple somatic symptoms, generalized weakness, increased fatigability and headache which is insidious in onset. Patient came to hospital one year back with a diagnosis of chronic abuse of benzodiazepines and was discharged from hospital after 3 days of admission. Patient was on incomplete treatment as he stopped taking prescribed drugs because pain started after taking alprazolam tablet. Patient came back to hospital again after 9 days with a chief complaint of irritation, palpitation, agitation and decreased sleep and was put on Tab.labrium 25mg, Tab.sertrax 25mg, Tab.pantop 40mg. As the patient felt diarrhea after 1 day of tablet intake because of this he stopped taking medication at home. Now came to hospital with the chief complaints of multiple somatic complaints for one week, finding difficulty in initiation and maintenance of sleep, started complaining increasing fatigability, headache. Based on the chief complaints and patient behavior it is diagnosed that patient is suffering from "Somatoform Disorder". The therapy has been started which includes tricyclic antidepressants, benzodiazepines, antipsychotics, proton pump inhibitor, analgesics etc. Patient condition was improved slowly with time by taking the recommended medications.

### DISCUSSION

Somatoform disorder is also known as somatic symptom disorder, is any mental disorder that is characterized by physical symptoms but cannot be illustrated by general medical condition. In people who are diagnosed with a somatoform disorder,

their medical tests were found either normal or do not explain the persons symptoms and the present medical condition do not explained by the history and physical examination. For the diagnosis of somatoform disorder the patient must have reoccurring somatic complaints from the past six months. Sometimes the symptoms are similar to other diseases and may last up to years. Normally the symptoms appearance begins in adolescence and diagnose before 30 years of age. It is very difficult to diagnosis and treat. The patient condition may improve medication along with cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT). In this case, we found multiple somatic symptoms, generalized weakness, increased fatigability and headache as primary symptoms by taking the patient history or by interacting with the patient. This confirmed that the patient is suffering from "Somatoform Disorder".

### CONCLUSION

In somatoform disorder or somatic symptom disorder the diagnosis and treating the patients with the disease is very difficult. However, the somatic symptoms generalized in four categories; neurological, cardiac, pain and gastrointestinal symptoms. Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) or psychotherapy used in the treatment of somatic symptoms disorder. In this, treatment must be taken either in pharmacological and non-pharmacological method to improve the physical quality of life, in patient with medically unexplained symptoms.

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