

Introduction

Exploring the Boundaries of Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder and Other Anxiety Disorders

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The Fifth International Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder Conference (5th IOCDC) took place March 29 to April 1, 2001, in the spectacular setting of Sardinia, Italy. This supplement, "Exploring the Boundaries of Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder and Other Anxiety Disorders: New Developments and Practical Approaches," is an outgrowth and testament to this exciting meeting and process.

The IOCDC has been a premier ongoing series of meetings in the OCD field, bringing together international experts in selected topics of interest to OCD and related disorders. Various research initiatives, such as the International Treatment-Refractory OCD Consortium and the International OCD Genetics Consortium, have been outgrowths of, and were facilitated by, this process. The 5th IOCDC focused on social anxiety disorder and generalized anxiety disorder, as well as OCD. These meetings have been generously supported by an unrestricted educational grant from Solvay Pharmaceuticals.

This supplement to *The Journal of Clinical Psychiatry* begins with an article by Nestadt and colleagues on defining the phenotype of OCD, which is essential for genetic and treatment studies of this syndrome. The authors describe a family-study approach that further validates the hypothesis that the phenotypic spectrum of OCD is relatively broad, including body dysmorphic disorder, hypochondriasis, and the grooming disorders as a group. This approach may also lead to the identification of more homogeneous subgroups within OCD.

McCracken, Walkup, and Koplewicz describe how the anxiety disorders are the most highly prevalent form of psychopathology in children and adolescents, affecting 6% to 10% of this population. They describe exciting treatment data from the Research Units on Pediatric Psychopharmacology, recently published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, that demonstrate selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor (SSRI) efficacy in a broad group of anxiety disorders, including separation anxiety, social anxiety, and generalized anxiety disorders. New investigations on the etiopathophysiology of anxiety in children and adolescents with CO₂ sensitivity and immune function are also described.

Stein, Westenberg, and Liebowitz describe the impact of SSRIs on amygdala-based fear circuits. They integrate models based on the role of dopaminergically mediated striatal circuits and new studies of SSRIs in social anxiety disorder and prefrontal abnormalities in generalized anxiety disorder. They describe how future studies will address the genetic and environmental factors that influence the neurocircuitry of anxiety.

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The symposium "Exploring the Boundaries of Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder and Other Anxiety Disorders: New Developments and Practical Approaches From the Fifth International OCD Conference," was held March 29–April 1, 2001, in Sardinia, Italy, and supported by an unrestricted educational grant from Solvay Pharmaceuticals.

Hollander and colleagues highlight state-of-the-art treatment for refractory OCD, a relatively common, disabling, but understudied disorder. They describe new data from the International Treatment-Refractory OCD Consortium that better characterize the OCD treatment nonresponder in terms of comorbidity, severity, insight, and course of illness. They describe new treatment data in OCD, as well as next step augmentation, switching, and novel treatment strategies for the OCD treatment nonresponder.

Finally, Pato, Pato, and Pauls describe how genetic studies of OCD have been hampered by heterogeneity of the clinical phenotype and lack of understanding of the molecular mechanism of the disorder. Efforts to narrow the phenotype have focused on 4 core symptom dimensions, and studies of comorbidity have focused on the related disorders of Tourette's syndrome, eating disorders, and impulse-control disorders. A family study approach to examine independently inheritable components that make up the more complex disorder of OCD is proposed. Candidate gene studies to understand the molecular mechanisms of OCD are described.

Thus, this supplement integrates and synthesizes cutting-edge research in anxiety and OCD with practical advice on how to conceptualize, understand, and manage these common, disabling disorders for which effective treatments are available that can substantially improve functioning in every aspect of patients' lives.

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