Difficulties of psychological therapy in patients with Meniere’s disease

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Introduction
Meniere’s disease (MD) is defined as the idiopathic form of endolymphatic hydrops. Typical symptoms are recurrent vertigo attacks, hearing loss, tinnitus, and/or a sensation of aural fullness in the affected ear.

The disease is psychosomatic, although the psychological dimension is not well recognized by a very large majority of clinicians.

The Aim of this study is to report the difficulties of psychological therapy and the effectiveness on the reduction of stress and depression among patients with Meniere’s disease.

Material and method
A group of 38 patients with symptoms of Meniere’s disease were followed in curdicular interviews; five of these patients underwent psychological assessment with cognitive behavioral therapy (C.B.T).

We have used The Questionnaire of Stressed Survival Situations prepared by Zenab Mahmoud Shuquair (1). We determined topics for the meetings, the number to be held and their duration, the general and secondary objectives, in addition to the training methods, procedures, activities and duties of each session, and also how to implement the program during the sessions.

We also planned 14 sessions for the program and the duration of each. The patients were trained for an hour and a half, at least once a week for 12 weeks. The program used several training methods including therapeutic education, dialogue, relaxation, role play and imagination.

Results
There are statistically significant differences between the average level of stress before and after the treatment by C.B.T (before 0.75 and after 0.38).

Difficulties are:

- The patients do not perceive the underlying psychology that the therapists do.
- They make defense type rationalization with hyperactivity, which can make it difficult to support therapeutic setting.
- Absence from psychotherapy sessions due to the highly frequent episodes of the illness.
- Positive transfer towards their ENT doctor rather than towards their psychologist.

Discussion
Lucente(2) and Fowler (3) have examined the relationship between Meniere’s symptoms and psychological stress and concluded that psychic stress intensified the symptoms of Meniere’s disease.

Rigatelli et al (4) examined 60 consecutive patients with vertigo using self-rating scales and concluded that the behavioral and relational limitations that result from symptoms of vertigo have tremendous influence on the psychic sphere.

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (C.B.T) offer a structured approach to diseases encountered in health psychology and psychosomatic medicine. According to Hettema et al (5), this approach has proved effective in adults through several randomized controlled trials.

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Conclusion
The Medical treatment of Meniere’s disease is often ineffective, research present evidence that psychological factors played a significant role in the management of this disease.

Psychological assessment, consultation, and CBT may prove beneficial to the overall well being of the patient and decrease stress, due to the negative influence of the vertigo and tinnitus on their quality of life.

References

Table 1: The Questionnaire of Stressed Survival Situations prepared by Zenab Mahmoud Shuquair (Arabic version)