

Lewy body dementia: symptoms and treatment



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Introduction

According to the World Health Organization, being healthy is being in a good physical, mental, and social well-being and not just the absence of an infection. This definition means that it does not call for any disparity in the wellness of an individual. Concerning health, a person can be considered as either having a high level of wellness or being having poor health and imminent death. This definition does not put into consideration aspects of disability or a chronic illness. For this paper, the main area of focus is the mental health in which one mental health condition will be identified, and then discussed on the mental health therapy, and then the application of the mental health therapy to a selected celebrity who for this case is Robin Williams (Segal, 2017).

Mental health should not only focus on how to improve psychological disorders, but it should also focus on subjective well-being, competence, autonomy, as well as the issues to do with the realization of one's potential. All this should revolve around psychotherapy. Mental health is very crucial, and we should not only look at how to encounter it, but we should also seek to create an awareness to the society about the effects of psychological disorders to an individual, to families, and to the society as a whole. At an individual level, a person who is suffering from any psychological disorder is at the risk of experiencing a decline in the quality of life, face some education related difficulties, experience some social problems, have a drop in their levels of productivity, be vulnerable to abuse and other health related problems (Segal, 2017). At the family level, a mentally ill person will require his or her close relatives to care for him/her. This will, therefore,

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subject them to a lot of burdens which in the long run might lead to some financial constraints. At the same time, the family members might be unable to work to their fullest capacity meaning that there will be a decline in production. Additionally, the family members may also suffer from chronic stress due to some psychological and physical challenges. Mental health does not affect individuals and their families only, but it also affects the society in various ways. For instance, this can influence the economic status of a country. This happens because these psychological disorders increase pressure on the economy of a country due to the burden it lays due to the need to have some medical and physiotherapy interventions. Also, the society suffers socially because, at certain instances, the psychologically ill individual may be at times show some dangerous behavior and violence. Therefore, this calls for local, national and international communities to come up with programs which will seek to prevent, control and alleviate this problem from the society (David, 2013).

Description of the Mental Health Issue

Overview of Lewy Body Dementia

This paper will look at Lewy Body Dementia which is a mental condition which affected Robin Williams. The name Lewy Body Dementia (LBD) can be at times used interchangeably with Dementia with Lewy Bodies (DLB). Studies show that Lewy Body Dementia was named with respect to a doctor who was the first person to identify the condition. According to him, this condition is a state which occurs as a result of deposits of proteins in the nervous system. One of the weaknesses of the research is that the study did not give a clear description of the relationship between the protein deposits and the brain.

But according to the study, the proteins affect the functioning of the nerves which serve as the messenger in our body system. Once these proteins are deposited in the nerve cells, they lead to the death of some of the nerve cells meaning that some brain tissues will, in the long run, be lost. The death and loss of these nerve cells lead to dementia (Segal, 2017).

Several mental conditions are affecting the brain and the nervous system whose cause is the Lewy bodies. Some of these diseases are LBD and the Parkinson's disease. Research has shown that Dementia Lewy Bodies share signs and symptoms with two diseases which are Alzheimer's disease and Parkinson's disease. All of these conditions are sometimes referred to as Lewy body disorders, and their difference is mainly in how each of the conditions starts. As time goes on, the symptoms of these conditions get worse. The signs and effects of the Lewy Bodies depend partially on their location in the brain. For instance, the Lewy bodies located at the base of the brain are understood to be the cause of problems related to movement. Motor symptoms are the major signs affiliated to the Parkinson disease. The Lewy bodies at the outer parts of the brain, on the other hand, have been connected to the complications of mental capacities which are referred to as the cognitive symptoms. These are the attributes of LBD (Lewy Body Dementia). The above condition can at times occur at the same time. Studies have shown that, in most of the cases, an individual associated with Parkinson will in the long end have dementia (Segal, 2017).

Lewy Body Dementia contributes to approximately 4% of the cases which have been recorded pertaining dementia. Although this might be the case, there are also signs that this condition has been understudied and it is,
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therefore, essential to come up with a mechanism which will ensure that better statistics are recorded. At the same time, of the cases of the death of brain tissues which have been established, only 10% of the cases of dementia are associated with DLB. Looking at the gender which is preferred by the condition, it can be stated that this disease is not sided to one gender since it affects the two sexes almost equally. Although gender might not influence the occurrence of this disease in the society, age is said to be one of the predisposing factors of this condition since studies have shown that the condition is more on individual who is more than 65 years although there are certain cases of DLB affecting individual who are less than 65 years of age. Apart from age which may act as a risk factor for this disease, other predisposing factors are the lifestyle, medical condition, and environmental factors. It is interesting that the cases of DLB which have been studied have shown no relationship between family history and the condition (David, 2013).

Symptoms of Lewy Body Dementia

Although people are different, most of the people suffering from this condition have symptoms of Alzheimer's disease as well as symptoms of Parkinson's disease. Additionally, these people will also have some signs and symptoms which are associated exclusively with LBD.

An individual suffering from DBL will have problems with attention as well as alertness. These two signs vary from one person to another. This fluctuation may change concerning hours or minutes. Additionally, the problem of hallucinations may come in hand with this condition since one may find it hard when judging physical distances as well as the perceived objects.

Hallucinations interfere with one's ability to remain organized hence meddling with planning and the organization of an individual. At the same time, there will be traces of depression and stress to the individual suffering from this problem. Memory lapse is also another symptom of this condition, and this is evident mainly in the early stages (Segal, 2017).

People suffering from this disease will in several occasions see things which in the real world do not exist. This is to mean that these people will at times see things which are not there. This affects mostly individuals suffering from DBL, and it causes a lot of stress. At the same time, we also have cases of auditory hallucinations in which one will tend to hear things which are not there. This happens although it is not a common symptom of this condition. These two aspects have been used in explaining which individuals suffering from this disorder will at times think and say things which are wrong or don't even exist. This issue does not only affect the affected individual, but also their relatives living with him or her. This is stressing and may even lead to suicide as it was the case with Robin Williams (Segal, 2017).

As stated earlier, we have some movement problems associated with this condition. Such symptoms are an indication that an individual has Parkinson's disease. Some of these problems which are affiliated to movement include slowness in movement, inflexibility in movement as well as blank facial expressions. At the same time, one may have problems when it comes to balancing whenever one is walking. Trembling is also an aspect which is related to LBD. These are the reasons why you find that a person suffering from this condition will fall severally. Additionally, these people will fall and faint or lose their consciousness for some few minutes (David, 2013).

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Sleep disorder is moreover another problem interrelated with this condition. At times, LBD will force one to fall asleep quickly although this will be characterized by restlessness and restless nights. During the night, this person will suffer from hallucinations, confusions, disorganization, very violent movements as well as incubuses (Shedler, 2014). This sleep pattern displayed by these individuals is known as rapid eye movement sleep behavior disorder. For persons who sleep in one bed or married couples, this problem is stressing and is at times harmful.

Diagnosis of Lewy Body Dementia

This is a very crucial stage since one should do it accurately so that you may not end up treating the wrong thing. If LBD is alleged, one must get the proper diagnosis since this is a very sensitive condition which if prescribed wrong, it can be very reactive and if prescribed in the best way, one will have benefits. LBD is hard to diagnose and it, therefore, calls for a person who is very experienced to do the diagnosis. There are several cases where an individual suffering from LBD has been diagnosed as having Alzheimer's disease. During the diagnosis, the psychiatric specialist is expected to talk to the person suffering from the condition as well as another person who is close to the patient. This will help in ensuring that an accurate history is taken as far as the condition is concerned. Part of the medical history may include when the symptoms were first seen, as well as the effects of the condition not only to the person but to the family too. At times, one can carry some mental ability test although this might be contradicting since there are complications associated with visual abilities and the spatial abilities too.

Additionally, during the diagnosis, the brain scan is important since it helps in differentiating LBD from vascular dementia (David, 2013).

Mental health therapy description of Lewy Body Dementia

Mental health therapy will involve all the mechanisms which will help in maintaining and improving mental state of a person suffering from Lewy Body Dementia. Physiotherapy involves the use of medication to ease the condition as well as non-medical treatments. Prescription for Lewy Body Dementia varies from one person to another because different people react differently to different kinds of medications. For instance, in the treatment of cognitive symptoms of Lewy Body Dementia, one doctor may decide to use donepezil and rivastigmine (David, 2013). At the same time, rigidity in an individual can be treated using Levodopa. On the other hand, sleep disorders can be treated using melatonin or clonazepam. We also have the non-medical mode of treatment. Some of these strategies may include the physical therapy, the speech therapy, occupational therapy, and the individual and family psychotherapy. All the above strategies will help in reducing stress to not only the affected, but also the entire family. Additionally, this helps in educating the affected so that he or she can have enough information concerning Lewy Body Dementia. This is also a way through which depression and other related aspects can be treated (Society, 2015).

Application of the above Mental Therapy to Robin Williams

Since Robin Williams was diagnosed with Lewy Body Dementia and his condition was characterized by chronic depression, and some hallucination, the mental therapy described above would have helped him. As far as the

physical therapy is concerned, it would be very important if a routine was created which would involve physical activities which will aid in strengthening him and enhance his stability and flexibility (David, 2013). This may involve some physical fitness programs. Since he was very depressed, individual and family psychotherapy is very important for this case. This would help him in enabling him to have some mechanisms which he could use to manage both his emotional and behavioral symptoms. Concerning the same, walking with Robin Williams would be essentially important since it will give him the opportunity to be outdoor and carry out some physical exercises which will help his state of mind. Medication is also important, and for this case, melatonin or clonazepam would have helped him in regulating the sleeping disorder. Similarly, cholinesterase inhibitors such as donepezil would have reduced stress and hallucinations (David, 2013).

Conclusion

In conclusion, mental disorders and specifically LBD have several harmful effects on an individual, the family, and the society at large. In the paper, most of the harmful effects of LBD and other related mental disorders have been discussed. This has helped in creating awareness to the society on why it would be important to control and manage these mental conditions not only LBD. If management of the condition had been employed on Robin Williams, he would not have suffered to the extent of committing suicide (Shedler, 2014). In the management of mental disorders, it is also advisable to first try the non-drug approaches before you go for medication because some drugs may have some harmful effects.

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