

What can we do to help these patients ? Referral ?

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# “NEGATIVE FOR PARASITES” *aka* Delusions or Unknown ??

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# 16 cases of Delusional Parasitosis 2003 - 2007

- 12 females : 4 males
- Age range: 26 – 83 years (mean age females 48 and males 41 years).
- Average duration symptoms: 10 months (range 4 weeks to 25 years).
- 100% cases with skin symptoms.
- 70% cases with skin lesions (all artefactual).

# Triggering factor or relevant event in 16 patients with delusional parasitosis

11/16 (70%) described relevant event:

- Tragic death of close relative.
- Animal bite, insect bite.
- Trip, journey.
- Sexual experience.
- Previous illness or treatment (breast Ca, surgical, thyroid, chemotherapy, stroke, Wegener's, infestation, cellulitis).

# Skin symptoms and lesions in 16 cases of Delusional Parasitosis

## SYMPTOMS

- Formication in 100%
- Pruritus in 90%
- Organisms (“real” or fantastic) in 40%
- Bites
- Inflammation
- Hair loss
- Discharge

## LESIONS

- Prurigo excoriée
- Dermatitis artefacta
- Folliculitis
- Papules
- Plaques
- Xerosis
- Hair loss
- None in 30% cases

# Clinical diagnoses in 16 patients with delusional parasitosis

## Main Dx

- Delusional parasitosis (in all 16 cases)
- *Folie a deux* (3 cases)
- *Folie a trois* (1 case)
- Dementia (1 case)
- OCD (3 cases)
- Anxiety (11 cases)

## Other Dx

- Phobia
- Anger
- BPD
- Self-harm
- Aggression
- Stalking
- Insomnia

# Personal, family, social, behavioural repercussions of “skin symptoms”

- Psychotherapist, GP, midwife, business, office jobs, retired, unemployed.
- Hallucinations, paranoia, guilt.
- Partial or total hair shaving and skin picking.
- Loss of home, employment, wealth.
- Family and social isolation. Crime.
- Extreme solutions (exorcism, fumigation, CDC reporting, Voodoo, filming overnight, multiple skin biopsies, x-files, new nosological entities).

# Which are the psycho-emotional and material costs of Delusional Parasitosis ?

Individual  
Family  
Society  
Health system

The background features several sets of concentric circles in a lighter shade of blue, resembling ripples in water, scattered across the lower half of the slide.



# Rule out organic and/or cutaneous illness

- Hodgkin's
- Non-Hodgkin's
- Cutaneous lymphoma
- Thyroid disease
- Liver condition
- Medicines history
- Neuropathy
- Kidney disease
- Scabies
- Eczema
- Xerosis
- HIV infection
- Folliculitis
- Pityriasis lichenoides
- Lichen
- Dermatitis herpetiformis

