The Mental Status Exam

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Thought

• Process
  – How thoughts are linked together

• Content
  – What the person thinks about
Thought Process
Thought Process

Circumstantial

Tangential
Flight of Ideas
‘Word Salad’
Delusions

• Persecutory
• Greatness (Grandiose)
• Nothingness (Nihilistic)
• Paranoid
• Love (Erotomaniac)
• Jealousy
• Guilt
• Illness (Hypochondriacal)
• Poverty
Other Thought Content Problems

- Preoccupations
- Over-valued ideas
- Obsessions
- Fears/Phobias
Homicidality/Suicidality

• Gather historical information (e.g., attempts, methods, circumstances, substance abuse, family history)
• Not binary; dimensional
• Assess for ‘motivation’
  – To die
  – To get out of/end an intolerable situation
  – To hurt someone else
  – To hurt self, atone
Perception

• Hallucination vs Illusion
• Which senses?
  – Auditory: sounds, voices (identifiable/not)
  – Visual: geometric/mandala, identifiable, vague
  – Olfactory
  – Sensory
  – Gustatory
Schneiderian First Rank Symptoms (modified)

- **Voices**
  - Speaking his thoughts out loud
  - Pt is subject of discussion
  - Command

- **Delusional percept (ideas of reference)**

- **Somatic passivity**

- **Thought**
  - Insertion
  - Withdrawal
  - Broadcasting

- **“Made”**
  - Feelings
  - Impluses
  - Voluntary acts
Other experiences

• Depersonalization
• Derealization
• Déjà vu
• Jamais vu
Insight

• The ability to be self-aware
• To acknowledge illness/problems
• Ask ‘Are you ill?’
• Lack of insight associated with psychosis, conversion disorders, addictions
• Anosognosia: extreme lack of insight due to damage to the parietal lobe (right)
Judgment

• Affected by level of insight (and cognitive abilities, intelligence, mood, personality, life circumstances, intoxication, delirium...)

• The process of consideration and formulation regarding a particular issue or situation that can lead to a decision/action.