What is Self Injurious Behavior (SIB): Can we treat it?
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A.M.B.E.R. clinic
Albuquerque Multidisciplinary Behavioral Evaluation for Recovery and Resiliency

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Overview

• Defining SIB
• Challenge of reliable statistics
• Medication strategies
• Working with incomplete information
Definition(s)

• Self Injurious Behavior (SIB)
  • not ONE thing
  • Usually repetitive
  • Multiple triggers

• Point of View
  • Self -- Other
Definitions

• Purpose
  • Distraction
  • Endorphin release
  • Automatism

• Habitual response
  • Anxiety; Boredom
Prevalence

- Assessing risky behavior
- Obsessions → Stereotypy → self-injury
- Medical underpinnings
  - Lesch-Nyhan (hypoxanthine-guanine phosphoribosyltransferase HPRT deficiency)
  - Prader Willi Syndrome (deletions chr 15q11-13)
  - Factitious disorder
  - Choking game
  - Psychosis (schizophrenia)
  - Congenital Insensitivity to Pain with Anhydrosis (CIPA)
  - Ekbohm syndrome (delusional parasitosis)
Animal observations

- High rate SIB in captive primates (10%)
- Stressors ~ increase SIB
- Long-acting naltrexone in rhesus macaques
- Behavioral responses by human handlers decreased self-biting and head-banging in olive baboons
- L-tryptophan (100mg/d) decreased wound area and severity in small-eared bushbabies
Clinical challenges

- Often non-verbal individuals
- Theories (assumptions?)
  - increased pain threshold
  - hyperalgesia
  - GERD
  - compulsions (Autism Spectrum D/O)
Medications...

- Naltrexone
- SSRI
  - Fluoxetine in primates decr SIB ~ decr plt serotonin and decr CSF 5HIAA.
- Beta-blocker
- Is there a role for antipsychotics?
Medication/therapy

- **Tricyclics**
- **Sleep aides?**
- **Lamotrigine** (for skin picking)
  - 12.5 – 300 mg/d: subset with lack cogn. flexibility
- **ECT?**
- **Behavioral supports**: “invisible” reinforcers can be transformed to positive behavioral supports
Treatment

- **Micronutrients for ASD**
  - decr. SIB, better health outcomes
- **Co-morbid BPD**
  - predictors self-harm
    - female, severity dysphoria, severity dissociation, major depression, h/o child sexual abuse, sexual assault as adult
  - DBT; CBT
Multidisciplinary Approach

• Behavioral Assessment
  • Functional
  • Applied Behavior Analysis
  • Positive Behavior Supports
  • Labeling

• Incomplete information
  • Different responses and learning in different contexts
  • Premature closure due to wording
Impotence in Providers

- Multiple sources for self-injury
- Develop ongoing strategy for re-assessment
- Communication from increased network (create dodecahedron of observations...)

Summary

- SIB multi-faceted
- Poor specificity of treatments for complex behaviors
- Prevalence, severity probably under-reported
- Continually assess for medical co-morbidity