SYMPOSIUM SESSIONS

Cross-Cultural Perspectives on Somatoform Disorders

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This paper will address the following issues pertinent to understanding the expression of somatic symptoms in different cultures:

(i) clinical approaches to interpreting patients' somatic complaints;

(ii) linguistic variation in available terms and phrases used by lay people to describe somatic symptoms; and

(iii) types of somatic complaints observed in patients.

Cross-cultural patterns and variation in these three domains will be described on the basis of reports in the literature and data collected in the WHO International Study of Somatoform Disorders.

Validity and Reliability of Procedures for the Assessment of Somatoform Disorders

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The WHO Mental Health Programme has developed several diagnostic interview questionnaires for the reliable and valid assessment of mental disorders. The CIDI is one such tool that has already been field-tested in more than 20 countries throughout the world. It has demonstrated good reliability and acceptability for cross-cultural studies. The Somatoform Disorders Schedule (SDS) is a newly-developed instrument based largely on the CIDI 1.1 section on somatoform disorders. It has been field-tested in five culturally distinct locations (USA, Brazil, Italy, India and Zimbabwe) and has been found to have high inter-rater reliability as well as test-pretest diagnostic reliability. Interviewer-observer reliability was also assessed, as were "inter-site" comparisons, and revealed a high reliability coefficient. This instrument should prove to be a useful instrument for future research on somatoform disorders.

ELIPRODIL: A NOVEL NEUROPROTECTIVE AGENT ACTING AT A MODULATORY SITE OF THE NMDA RECEPTOR.

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The NMDA receptor, composed of heteromeric assemblies of NR1 and NR2 (A-D) subunits, is co-activated by glutamate and glycine and positively modulated by spermine and spermidine via at least two modulatory polyamine sites with distinct actions. Polyamines increase glycine site affinity but also increase NMDA responses in the presence of saturating concentrations of glycine. The piperidine-ethanol derivatives ifenprodil and eliprodil have been shown to block the NMDA receptor via an interaction with a modulatory polyamine site. They partially displace [^{3}H]CPP, [^{3}H]glycine or [^{3}H]MK801 at submicromolar concentrations but antagonize the stimulatory effects of polyamines on the binding of these ligands. In different brain areas, their NMDA antagonistic effects have been shown to be total, biphasic or partial and can be reversed either by the polyamines or by glycine, suggesting action at the polyamine site that regulates glycine site affinity. [^{3}H]ifenprodil or eliprodil label a site on the NMDA receptor which is totally displaced by spermine and spermidine in a competitive manner. Recent studies have shown that ifenprodil and eliprodil selectively antagonize a specific NMDA receptor subtype . In transfected Xenopus oocytes ifenprodil antagonises NR1A/NR2B receptors with high affinity (IC_{50}=340nM) in a glycine reversible and voltage-independent manner and blocks the NR1A/NR2A subtype (IC_{50}=146μM) in a voltage-dependent and glycine-insensitive manner (Williams, Mol.Pharmacol. 44, 851-859, 1993). The selectivity of ifenprodil for a subtype of NMDA receptor is supported by the distribution of polyamine-sensitive [^{3}H]ifenprodil binding sites which closely matches that of NR2B receptor mRNA. In striatal slices, ifenprodil and eliprodil block the stimulatory effects of NMDA on

Published by Elsevier Science Inc. 1994
655 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10010 0893-133X/94