

Habit Reversal for Tic-like Vocalizations and Functional Coprolalia - a case report.

Dipesh Patel^{1, 2}, Jacqueline Foong¹ and Panayiota Petrochilos¹

¹ Department of Neuropsychiatry, University College London Hospital Foundation Trust, Queen Square, London, WC1N 3BG, United Kingdom ² University College London - Institute of Neurology, Queen Square, London, WC1N 3BG, United Kingdom

Objective To present an adult single case study of the implementation of a behavioral intervention (i.e., Habit Reversal Training) for the treatment of tic-like vocalizations and functional coprolalia.

Method A forty-six-year-old male patient with no previous history of motor and/or vocal tics was referred to a tertiary-care neuropsychiatry outpatient clinic following a tic onset which commenced approximately five months prior to referral. The involuntary tic-like vocalizations and functional coprolalia (i.e., in the English language, four-letter short words of an obscene and socially inappropriate nature) had prompted the patient to seek clinical input as these symptoms were associated to a poor quality of life as well as a range of further neuropsychiatric problems, such as increased experiences of both anxiety and depression. At times, vocal tics were preceded by a premonitory sensation. Temporarily and with significant restlessness, purposeful suppressibility for a few minutes at a time was achievable. However, this was ineffective in scenarios in which a heightened degree of irritation and/or stress was experienced.

Tic-Like Vocalization



Results By the end of a six-week treatment window, we were able to report the following:

- Habit Reversal Training did not significantly change the frequency and/or intensity of tic-like vocalizations and functional coprolalia from baseline to treatment end.
- Awareness training alone reduced the frequency of tic-like vocalizations and functional coprolalia.
- An association between the development of new tic-like vocalization and functional coprolalia and depression and anxiety related symptoms emerged which potentially serve as an additional risk factor for the development of tic-like/functional behaviors.

