

HYSTERICAL PSYCHOSIS

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Introduction: The term hysterical psychosis has been in common usage for longer than half a century, but has never become part of the standard nomenclature. This entity is characterized by acute onset, often following the occurrence of an emotionally disturbing event, absence of any characteristic thought disturbance, and affectivity changes in the direction of volatility. Its manifestations can also include hallucinations, delusions, depersonalization and behavior disorders. Though the acute episode seldom lasts from one to three weeks, it has good prognosis and there is practically no residue after the symptoms disappear.

Aims: A review about the evolution and the actual interest and adequacy of this clinical entity. The very existence of hysterical psychosis as a diagnostic entity has been questioned as part of the general difficulty in defining both hysteria and psychosis.

Methods: A non-systematic review of PubMed articles.

Conclusion: The hysterical psychosis occurs in patients with a hysterical personality / histrionic, with more colorful psychotic symptoms, which are somehow characteristic. This seems to condition the definition of a well defined nosological entity, as long as diagnostic, prognostic and therapeutic implications. It still seems questionable whether the concept of hysterical psychosis should be kept as an entity with well-defined etiologic determinants, however in clinical terms this approach may have advantages.