

CHARLES BONNET SYNDROME(CBS): SUCCESSFUL TREATMENT OF VISUAL HALLUCINATIONS DUE TO VISION LOSS WITH TRAZODONE IN THREE CASES

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Background: CBS becomes more prevalent as the population ages and the number of patients with low vision increases. Clinical features of CBS have been described as complex visual hallucinations with insight due to the vision loss or visual ability decrease in patients who're otherwise mentally normal. We describe three typical CBS patients whose visual hallucinations developed after bilateral severe visual impairment due to diabetic retinopathy. They responded well to treatment with trazodone. The effectiveness of trazodone in these patients adds to evidence implicating serotonergic pathways in the pathogenesis of visual hallucinations.

Case report: The characteristics of 3 patients and their reactions are listed in table 1.

Table 1 Characteristics of 3 patients with Charles Bonnet syndrome

	Case 1	Case 2	Case 3
Age (years)	68	72	76
Sex	female	male	female
Number of family members living with patient	0	0	3
Visual acuity	<0.01(Lt) / 0.1(Rt)	vision loss(Lt) / 0.2(Rt)	vision loss(Lt) / <0.01(Rt)
Duration of symptoms	1 year	1.5 year	1 year
Hallucinations	People, dogs, cats, figures/ colored/ solid/ movable	People, animals, torsos or isolated heads/ colored/ solid/ movable	Children, cats, bricks, torsos or isolated heads/ colored/ solid/ fixed
Treatment dosage	100 mg	50 mg	100 mg
Change in frequency of hallucination	stopped	stopped	decreased
Discussed with family	no	yes	yes
Fear of impending insanity or guilty feeling	yes	yes	yes

[Table 1]

Discussion: This is the first report describing the effectiveness of trazodone in treating typical CBS patients. It indicates that trazodone is an safer option for the treatment of CBS, especially in the elderly, diabetic population. In addition to having fewer interactions with

comedications, trazodone has fewer adverse effects and relative lower body weight gain risk compared to anticonvulsants and neuroleptics. CBS is a condition that many clinicians aren't very familiar with, yet it's a surprisingly high prevalence rate(10%-30%) among the visually impaired. Clinicians must therefore keep in mind and ask elderly people with visual impairment whether they've hallucinations.