

Sample Case Report

Date: May 18, 2005

Description:

Patient is a young woman in her early 20's, approximately 5' 6", with black hair, red lips, and very fair skin, living in a rural area. Little is known about patient's life history, except that her mother is deceased. Patient's relationship with her stepmother came up immediately in the interview; patient fears that the stepmother has magical powers and is trying to kill her. Initial attempts to explore this belief using rational emotive techniques proved unsuccessful – if this is a delusion, it is deeply held.

Patient reports feeling cheerful most of the time (aside from bouts of fear concerning the stepmother). She co-habitates with seven small men, each of whom she identifies by a salient feature of their personality. Her thoughts tend to run toward everyday activities – washing dishes, collecting fruits and berries from the forest. Patient reports that “the animals help me with all this”...not clear from this interview whether this is a delusion, or whether she has assisted-living pets (e.g. trained helper monkey). The latter would be surprising, as she was not visibly disabled in any way.

Music seems to be an important part of the patient's life. Though she is not a professional musician, she often expresses herself by singing and seems to be very talented. Her singing, like her demeanor, is generally positive and optimistic.

Towards the end of the interview, patient expressed a desire for a romantic relationship with a man. She appears not to have been in such a relationship before, and described this man in idealized, childlike terms such as “my prince.” Also mentioned her hope that this “prince” would appear at some unnamed time in the future (seems unlikely, as she has few social contacts outside of her living group).

Conclusions:

Patient seems well-adjusted and emotionally stable, so there is no need for aggressive therapy or psychopharmaceutical counseling. Consultation with the patient's PCP¹ and/or relatives is needed to determine whether the “wicked” stepmother and the animal helpers are delusions. It is a bit surprising that a woman of this age still has infantile fantasies regarding men and relationships, and it might be fruitful to probe this issue in a course of humanistic or cognitive therapy. This could help her to attain more realistic attitudes and expectations regarding relationships.

¹ Primary care physician