

DELUSIONS OF ALZHEIMER`S DISEASE: DUE TO BRAIN LESIONS OR PSYCHOLOGICAL REASONS?

S. Ueda, Y. Okubo

Neuropsychiatry, Nippon Medical School, Japan

sat333@nms.ac.jp

Delusions of robbery and jealousy often occur in patients with mild to moderate Alzheimer's disease (AD) and give caregivers more burdens. From a neurological point of view, the causes of these delusions are not yet clear. Their neural correlates are only partially known. On the other hand, the involvement of social and psychological factors has been pointed out. Some cases where stubborn delusions easily disappear by interpersonal or psychosocial intervention may well indicate the psychological causes of delusions. It is essential to identify the causes of delusions in AD patients, as the best treatment will differ depending on the cause.

We were associated with two elderly cases with mild AD. A man complained that a carer in a Day Service robbed him of his money. Then another carer asked him to teach him how to play the game of go, as the carer knew he was very good at the game. He began to concentrate on teaching the game, and the delusion of robbery disappeared. A married woman often stopped her husband from going out, telling him not to meet another woman. According to her clinician's advice, they slept in the same room and bathed together as they had done before she developed AD. Her jealous delusion was resolved.

These delusions appeared to have originated from a lack of self-efficacy and the absence of intimate marital relationship. These cases suggest that delusion of AD may well be psychogenic rather than somatogenic.