



Association Between Paraphilic And Obsessive-Compulsive Symptoms In Women

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ABSTRACT

Objective: DSM-5 differentiated paraphilias from paraphilic disorders (PD), making the boundaries among paraphilic fantasies, paraphilias and PD more precise. The aim of this study was to evaluate the association between paraphilic and obsessive symptoms using DSM-5 criteria for paraphilias and PD.

Methods: One hundred and ninety female medical students were evaluated using anonymous / self-reporting questionnaires. For symptoms of Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD), the Yale-Brown scale was used. For symptoms of Obsessive-Compulsive Personality Disorder (OCPD) and paraphilias, scales based on DSM-5 were used.

Results: The most paraphilic fantasies were: Voyeurism (30.2%) and Fetishism (25.4%). The most frequent paraphilias were: Voyeurism (9%) and Fetishism (8.5%). In relation to PD, the most frequent were: Voyeuristic (6.9%), Masochistic (3.7%) and Frotteuristic (3.7%). Subclinical OCD was statistically significant when associated with paraphilic fantasies, while OCD was associated with paraphilia and PD. OCPD was statistically significant when associated with fantasies, paraphilia and PD.

Conclusion: The intensity of OCD symptoms was directly related to the intensity of the paraphilic symptoms and the OCPD was associated with paraphilic fantasies, paraphilias and PD. The results point to trends of association among these clinical conditions, which recommends further research in this direction.

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INTRODUCTION

The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 5th edition (DSM-5) provided a formal distinction between paraphilias and paraphilic disorders (PD).^[1] The prevalence of PD is still unknown and is only estimated.^[1,2] As most paraphilias are liable to prosecution or cause embarrassment, the bearer has difficulty revealing them.^[3] Not infrequently, the paraphilic can present multiple paraphilias.^[1] Some studies show a higher prevalence of PD in males.^[4-7] However, estimates in women seem to be minimized as they can sublimate their pregenital impulses. Thus, they are less likely to externalize their paraphilic behavior.^[8-11] The etiology of PD is still little known, but many hypotheses have been formulated.^[8] Psychological, environmental, organic, and even physical aspects of individuals have been studied.^[12-27] The prevalence of Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD) reaches fewer than 2% throughout life, but there are methodological controversies.^[28,29] The etiology of OCD is also not known; however, multiple theories have been proposed: genetic influences,^[30,31] cerebral abnormalities,^[32] psychological and environmental factors.^[33,34] The prevalence of OCPD is estimated at 2.1 to 7.9% of the general population and is twice as high in men.^[1] Its etiology is supported by psychodynamic, genetic and morphological alterations.^[35-38] The literature reports that Paraphilias are sometimes identified as belonging to the spectrum of OCD.^[39-41] Others also consider OCD and paraphilias to be part of the impulsive-compulsive spectrum.^[26,42] Common organic factors have been described: response to selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs),^[8,43] association with Tourette's syndrome,^[44] study of various organic and psychological aspects common to OCD and paraphilia.^[45] The correlation between OCPD and paraphilia has also been investigated. Bogaerts, Daalder, Vanheule, Desmet and Leeuw (2008)^[46] showed that among the personality disorders studied, the only one that was significantly

associated with the paraphilic abuse of children was the obsessive-compulsive. Hebbbar (2014)^[47] studied a case of OCD associated with OCPD and paraphilias. Other authors, such as Chan and Beauregard (2016),^[48] found an association between paraphilias and several personality disorders, among them OCPD. However, studies on the association between OCPD and paraphilias are rarer than those associated with OCD. The association between obsessive symptoms and paraphilias is a topic that has been discussed since the early days of psychiatry, but without conclusion.^[40] Therefore, the objective of this study was to investigate this association.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Ethics

This study was approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the Medical School. All the subjects formalized their participation by signing the Free and Informed Consent Terms of the Medical School.

Participants

Three hundred female medical students from a private Brazilian university were recruited. All those over 18 who accepted to participate were included: 190 accepted to respond to the questionnaires in October 2016. Of the 190, none were excluded.

Instruments

All the questionnaires were self-reporting in order to preserve the anonymity of the participants and to make the answers more reliable. In the questionnaires that discuss paraphilias and PD, items 1, 2 and 3 refer to the main paraphilias (exhibitionism, voyeurism, fetishism, frotteurism, pedophilia, sexual masochism, sexual sadism and transvestism) while items 4 and 5 refer to the PD. These instruments were elaborated according to the DSM-5 criteria in the Portuguese version for paraphilia and PD.^[1,49] Therefore, criterion A of DSM-5 is divided into sub items 1, 2 and 3 and criterion B into sub-items 4 and 5, respectively. If the participant provided positive answers for criterion A (items 1, 2 and 3) she was considered as having the respective

paraphilia. That is, if the answers were "a few times", "sometimes", "often" or "always" for item 1, "yes" for item 2 and "a", "b" or "c" for item 3. In the case of a positive response also to items 4 or 5 (criterion B), the participant was considered to be the bearer of the respective PD, which corresponds to responding "a few times", "sometimes", "often" or "always" to items 4 or 5. On the other hand, the participant was considered to be the bearer of only her paraphilic fantasy if she answered "few times", "sometimes", "often" or "always" to item 1, but has not met the criteria for paraphilias.

The presence of life-long OCPD was investigated through a questionnaire developed according to the Portuguese version of DSM-5.^[49] The instrument was elaborated with eight questions whose answers could be "yes" or "no". If four or more responses were "yes," the diagnosis of OCPD was confirmed, as defined by DSM-5.

Symptoms of lifelong OCD were assessed using the Portuguese version of the Yale-Brown scale (Y-BOCS).^[50] A brief explanation of the meanings of obsessions and compulsions was provided by the researcher to the participants prior to the application of the scale.^[51,52] The result is obtained by the following total scores: equal to or greater than 16 characterizes OCD; between 8 and 15 means subclinical OCD; less than 8 identifies minimal or absence of symptoms.

The evaluations of the presence of paraphilias / PD and OCPD were developed, according to the DSM-5 criteria, due to the absence of valid scales in Portuguese. Questionnaires were developed (paraphilia / PD and OCPD) adapted to a simplified language in order to improve participants' understanding. A self-reporting questionnaire was also developed for socio-cultural evaluation.

Procedures

Group meetings were organized with the students in order to present the project and clarify possible doubts, preparing them to fill out the questionnaires in a self-reporting manner. All precautions were taken so that no participants had their answers identified.

Therefore, for ethical reasons, confidentiality has been prioritized, maintaining privacy and more reliable answers regarding sexual fantasies. Even the researcher would not be able to identify any of the respondents' answers.

Statistical analysis

The sample size calculation was based on the sampling technique for a finite population size (N = 300), adopting a 95% confidence interval and 5% error margin as parameters. Thus, the minimum N would be 169. Three hundred students were recruited, and of these, 190 accepted to answer the questionnaires. The data collected was represented by the descriptive analysis of the sample, containing information such as absolute and relative frequency. The tests of association of OCD and/or OCPD were conducted with each of the paraphilias studied, as well as with PD and paraphilic fantasies. The results were compiled into tables containing the frequency and percentage of each clinical condition (OCD, OCPD, each of the paraphilias, each of the PD and each of the paraphilic fantasies). As the main objective of the present study was to verify the possibility of correlation between OCD and paraphilias, OCD and PD, OCPD and paraphilias, OCPD and PD, these variables were considered as binary ("Yes" or "No"). In order to test the hypothesis of interest, the Fisher exact test or the Chi-square test was applied. In addition to this, simple and multiple logistic regression models were adjusted to determine the factors that characterize a group of individuals with the event of interest relative to those who do not present them. For the statistical analysis, a level of significance of 5% was established and the software Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 18) was used.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 shows the sociodemographic data of the 190 students evaluated. The group consisted of mostly healthy, unmarried, caucasian women with incomplete higher education, catholics, heterosexuals and a good socio-economic level. The youngest was 18 years old and the oldest was 32. The median age was 22, the average 22.13 and 3.7% omitted this information.

Table 1: Socio-demographic data (total N = 190).

Variable	Categories	n (%) (n=190)
Race	Caucasian	172 (90.5 %)
	Indian (South American)	11 (5.8 %)
	Asian (Japanese, Chinese and others)	3 (1.6 %)
	Omitted	4 (2.1 %)
	Total	186 (97.9 %)
Socioeconomic status	Average financial conditions	57 (30 %)
	Good financial conditions	128 (67.4 %)
	Omitted	5 (2.6 %)
	Total	185 (97.4 %)
Physical Health	Good	163 (85.8 %)
	Minor issues	23 (12.1 %)
	Omitted	4 (2.1 %)
	Total	186 (97.9 %)
Schooling	Complete primary education	1 (0.5 %)
	Incomplete secondary education	2 (1.1 %)
	Complete secondary education	24 (12.6 %)
	Incomplete higher education	138 (72.6 %)
	Complete higher education	19 (10 %)
	Omitted	6 (3.2 %)
	Total	184 (96.8 %)
Marital status	Single	177 (93.2 %)
	Stable union	6 (3.2 %)
	Married	2 (1.1 %)
	Omitted	5 (2.6 %)
	Total	185 (97.4 %)
Sexual orientation	Heterosexual	179 (94.2 %)
	Homosexual	4 (2.1 %)
	Bisexual	2 (1.1 %)
	Omitted	5 (2.6 %)
	Total	185 (97.4 %)
Religion	Other	6 (3.2 %)
	Not present	14 (7.4 %)
	None and catholic	1 (0.5 %)
	Catholic	123 (64.7 %)
	Catholic and Spiritualist	2 (1.1 %)
	Christian	21 (11.1 %)
	Spiritualist	23 (12.1 %)
	Total	190 (100 %)

The most observed paraphilic fantasies were: at least one paraphilia (53.2%), voyeurism (30.2%) and fetishism (25.4%). The most commonly reported paraphilias were at least one paraphilia (24.5%), voyeurism (9%) and

fetishism (8.5%), while the most common PD were at least one PD (13.8%), voyeuristic (6.9%), masochism 3.7%) and frotteuristic (3.7%). The frequency of paraphilic fantasies, paraphilias, PD, subclinical OCD, OCD and OCPD are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Frequencies of each clinical condition (total N = 190). Those participants who provided either incompatible or no answers to a certain diagnosis were excluded from the corresponding clinical condition. Among the 189 who answered about Fetishism, 48 presented fantasies, but only 3 presented PD.

Categories	Fantasy		Paraphilia		Paraphilic Disorder (PD)		Results		
	Total	n (%)	Total	n (%)	Total	n (%)	Category	Total	n (%)
Voyeurism	179	54 (30.2 %)	189	17 (9.0 %)	189	13 (6.9 %)	OCD	183	24 (13.1 %)
Exhibitionism	186	30 (16.1 %)	188	7 (3.7 %)	190	5 (2.6 %)	Sub-clinical OCD	180	45 (25.0 %)
Frotteurism	188	33 (17.6 %)	190	12 (6.3 %)	190	7 (3.7 %)	OCPD	190	43 (22.6 %)
Masochism	190	26 (13.7 %)	190	12 (6.3 %)	189	7 (3.7 %)			
Sadism	189	11 (5.8 %)	189	3 (1.6 %)	190	2 (1.1 %)			
Pedophilia	190	3 (1.6 %)	190	2 (1.1 %)	190	2 (1.1 %)			
Fetishism	189	48 (25.4 %)	189	16 (8.5 %)	190	3 (1.6 %)			
Transvestism	190	1 (0.5 %)	190	1 (0.5 %)	190	0 (0.0 %)			
At least one	186	99 (53.2 %)	188	46 (24.5 %)	188	26 (13.8 %)			

OCD had $p \leq 0.05$ when associated with paraphilia and PD (voyeurism, exhibitionism, frotteurism, and at least one), sadism paraphilia and fetishistic PD. Subclinical OCD had $p \leq 0.05$, when associated with fantasies (exhibitionism, fetishism and at least one) and

fetishism paraphilia. OCPD had $p \leq 0.05$ when associated with fantasies (voyeurism, fetishism and at least one), paraphilias (exhibitionism, fetishism and at least one) and PD (exhibitionist, masochism, fetishist and at least one) (Table 3).

Table 3: Association between paraphilic conditions and OCD, sub-clinical OCD, and OCPD. Among the 46 female students that presented at least one of the paraphilias, 13 had OCD and 54.2 % of those with OCD presented at least one paraphilia.

Variable	OCD		P value
	No	Yes	
Voyeuristic paraphilia	11 (7 %)	6 (25 %)	0.013
Voyeuristic PD	8 (5.1 %)	5 (20.8 %)	0.016
Exhibitionistic paraphilia	4 (2.5 %)	3 (12.5 %)	0.05
Exhibitionistic PD	2 (1.3 %)	3 (12.5 %)	0.017
Frotteuristic paraphilia	7 (4.4 %)	5 (20.8 %)	0.011
Frotteuristic PD	3 (1.9 %)	4 (16.7 %)	0.006
Sadistic paraphilia	1 (0.6 %)	2 (8.3 %)	0.046
Fetishistic PD	1 (0.6 %)	2 (8.3 %)	0.046
At least one paraphilia	33 (21 %)	13 (54.2 %)	0.002
At least one PD	17 (10.8 %)	9 (37.5 %)	0.002
Sub-clinical OCD			
	No	Yes	
Exhibitionistic fantasy	17 (12.7 %)	13 (31 %)	0.012
Fetishistic fantasy	29 (21.6 %)	18 (40 %)	0.026
Fetishistic paraphilia	8 (6 %)	8 (17.8 %)	0.03
At least one paraphilic fantasy	62 (47 %)	32 (72.7 %)	0.005
OCPD			
	No	Yes	
Voyeuristic fantasy	35 (25.4 %)	19 (46.3 %)	0.018
Exhibitionistic paraphilia	1 (0.7 %)	6 (14.3 %)	0.001
Exhibitionistic PD	1 (0.7 %)	4 (9.3 %)	0.01
Sexual masochistic PD	3 (2 %)	4 (9.5 %)	0.045
Fetishistic fantasy	31 (21.2 %)	17 (39.5 %)	0.026

Fetishistic paraphilia	7 (4.8 %)	9 (20.9 %)	0.002
Fetishistic PD	0 (0 %)	3 (7 %)	0.011
At least one paraphilic fantasy	68 (47.6 %)	31 (72.1 %)	0.005
At least one paraphilia	27 (18.6 %)	19 (44.2 %)	0.001
At least one PD	14 (9.6 %)	12 (28.6 %)	0.004

The logistic regression model showed that in relation to the fantasies, none were sufficient in explaining OCD, only the voyeurism fantasy was significant in explaining OCPD (OR = 2.154, but p = 0.05) and only the exhibitionism fantasy was significant in explaining sub-clinical OCD (OR = 3.296). The paraphilias that were significant in explaining OCD were "at least one paraphilia" (OR = 6.448) and sadism paraphilia (OR = 54,759, however with a large confidence interval due to the small

number of students with OCD and sadism). The significant paraphilias in explaining OCPD were: exhibitionism (OR = 15.221) and fetishism (OR = 4.097). No paraphilia was enough in explaining sub-clinical OCD. In relation to PD: the frotteristic PD was important in explaining OCD (OR = 14,109); the exhibitionist PD (OR = 10,713) and sexual masochism (OR = 5,423) were significant in explaining OCPD. No PD was significant in explaining sub-clinical OCD (Table 4).

Table 4: Logistic regression model

Result	Variable	Estimate	Standard error	p value	Odds ratio (OR)	CI (95 %) for OR	
						Lower	Upper
OCD	Voyeuristic fantasy (Yes)	0.767	0.392	0.05	2.154	1	4.644
	Exhibitionistic paraphilia (Yes)	2.723	1.124	0.015	15.221	1.682	137.759
	Fetishistic paraphilia(Yes)	1.41	0.574	0.014	4.097	1.329	12.63
	Exhibitionistic PD (Yes)	2.371	1.167	0.042	10.713	1.087	105.549
	Sexual Masochistic PD (Yes)	1.691	0.799	0.034	5.423	1.133	25.962
Sub-clinical OCD	Exhibitionistic fantasy (Yes)	1.193	0.442	0.007	3.296	1.386	7.837
OCD	Sadism paraphilia (Yes)	4.003	1.761	0.023	54.759	1.734	1729.164
	At least one paraphilia (Yes)	1.864	0.559	0.001	6.448	2.157	19.274
	Frotteuristic PD (Yes)	2.647	0.837	0.002	14.109	2.734	72.803

In this study, paraphilic fantasies were differentiated from paraphilias and PD according to DSM-5 criteria in a female population, which was not found in studies prior to the fifth DSM version.

Paraphilic individuals with exhibitionistic, frotteuristic, voyeuristic, and pedophilic behavior are considered PD because, by definition, they are consummate impulses with someone who has not consented or is unable to consent. In contrast, sadistic behavior can be performed with consenting individuals and therefore is not classified as PD, if there is consent and there is no suffering. [1] The "DSM-

5 Criterion A" for Pedophilic Disorder states: "Over a period of at least 6 months, recurrent, intense sexually arousing fantasies, sexual urges, or behaviors involving sexual activity with a prepubescent child or children (generally age 13 years or younger) ". [1] Therefore, the word "behavior" of this "criterion A" could have been suppressed in the exhibitionist, frotteurist, voyeurist, and pedophilic scenario, as these behaviors are always PD.

Pedophilia and transvestism were scarce in this study, and pedophilic clinical conditions were more frequent in other studies). [53-55] As pedophilia is a crime, the application of face-to-

face questionnaires could inhibit the trustworthiness of the responses. Another hypothesis would be that these clinical conditions are even rarer in women, at least with these sociodemographic characteristics. Another possibility is the fact that women sublimate their pedophilic impulses, resulting in less frequency. [8,10,56]

Similar to the studies by Frías et al. (2017), [9] masochism PD was also very frequent, just behind the voyeuristic PD. The masochism paraphilia was more recurrent than the exhibitionism paraphilia, contrary to what happened with the respective fantasies. This suggests that exhibitionistic fantasies are more common than masochistic ones, but not as intense and persistent for at least six months as the latter.

Masochism was more frequent than sadism in the three intensities, according to Levitt, Moser and Jamison (1994) [57] in the female population. Some authors report much higher frequencies of sadomasochism, at least in relation to fantasies. All these studies used an online sample, rather than face-to-face respondents, such as this study, [5,58] which may explain the lower frequency observed here.

In this study, fetishism was the second fantasy and the second most frequent paraphilia. However, there was a low rate of PD, which suggests that having fetishistic fantasies does not usually lead to suffering. The frequency of fetishistic fantasy corroborated the findings of Scorolli et al. (2007). [59] Oliveira Júnior and Abdo (2010) [6] also found the highest frequencies in fetishism and voyeurism. The comparison of this research with other data in the literature was made difficult because the other studies did not perform the distinction among fantasy, paraphilia and PD, as the new DSM-5 criteria was only published more recently. In relation to OCD, a frequency of 13.1-percent was observed, which is much higher than that described in the literature (2%). As the answers to this research were self-reporting, it is worth remembering that in the Yale-Brown scale, some authors found a valid convergence between the face-to-face

interview (non self-reporting) and the self-reporting interview, with a higher score for the latter interview. [60] The frequency of OCPD was found to be 22.6%, while the estimated value for the general population is between 2.1 and 7.9% (APA, 2013). However, higher frequencies are referred to in self-reporting surveys. [61]

Some authors have described associations between OCD and paraphilias. [8,18,26,39-41,47,62-65] However, such research was based on case studies, literature reviews, theories, letters to the editor, and even non-paraphilic compulsive sexual behaviors. Paraphilic fantasies and obsessions are intrusive thoughts and OCD rituals are similar to compulsive masturbation or other paraphilic sexual behaviors. Both OCD and paraphilias have comorbidity with the spectrum of anxiety and with some degree of depression. [43] Abdo et al. (2001) [18] studied two cases of association between OCD and Transvestism. In paraphilias, intrusive thoughts (fantasies) are pleasurable, while in OCD they are unpleasant. The findings of the present study confirm that subclinical OCD is more associated with paraphilic fantasies, whereas OCD is associated with paraphilia and PD. Therefore, the more intense the paraphilic symptoms, the greater the possibility of OCD symptoms. Southern (2008) [68] demonstrated an association between compulsive virtual sex and sexual disorders, such as courtship disorders. In the present study, the paraphilic symptoms of courtship (voyeurism, exhibitionism and frotteurism), fetishism and sadism were those associated with OCD, and the differential of this research is the division of the cadres into paraphilic fantasies, paraphilias and PD (according to the criteria of DSM-5) and their association with OCD, demonstrating that the greater the intensity of paraphilic symptoms, the greater the intensity of OCD symptoms. As for the association between OCPD and paraphilias, the studies are much scarcer than those with OCD. [46-48,67] In the present sample, OCPD was associated with fantasies (voyeurism, fetishism and at least one paraphilic fantasy), paraphilias (exhibitionism,

masochism, fetishism and at least one paraphilia) and PD (exhibitionist, sexual masochism, fetishist and at least one PD). Therefore, although several studies (including this research) show an association of OCPD with cases of paraphilias, no substantial results were obtained to conclude that there is an association of OCPD with one or other paraphilic condition. Hence, the need for a standardized methodology for both cadres. The development of PD questionnaires based on the DSM-5 criteria helps to define to what extent the individual only has a paraphilic fantasy or a paraphilia and when the PD really begins.

It is important that the instruments (for PD, OCD and OCPD) are self-reporting and validated. Studies with larger samples may also be useful, as well as with different sociodemographic characteristics. Neuroimaging assessments may also demonstrate common pathophysiological mechanisms. Regarding the mode of application, studies can compare online/telephone interviews with face-to-face interviews. Joyal and Carpentier (2017) ^[11] found a higher frequency of paraphilias in online interviews than by telephone. Associations of the various types of OCD (aggressive, sexual, contamination, etc.) with symptoms of paraphilias could be investigated. For example, a sadist who causes symmetrical lesions and counts the number of lashes he has inflicted on a masochist, would his condition be associated with symmetry or counting OCD? Another important point is to differentiate when PD is characterized by consummating the act with an individual who did not consent or is unable to consent (item 4), or when the individual presents suffering or psychosocial problems due to the paraphilia in question (item 5). If there is an association between paraphilic and obsessive symptoms, it is important to investigate paraphilias in obsessives and vice versa. The use of SSRIs can treat OCD and a possible associated PD, as serotonergic action inhibits libido. ^[26] Therefore, the earlier the diagnosis of both

cases, the earlier the appropriate treatment can be established.

CONCLUSION

The presence of PD and paraphilia in female medical students was frequently reported on a self-reporting scale. The more frequent the paraphilic symptoms, the more frequent the symptoms of OCD. Similarly, the more frequent the paraphilic symptoms, the more frequent the symptoms of OCPD.

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