

Impulse Control in Individuals: A Case Study of a 19-Year-Old College Student

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Abstract

Impulse-control disorder (ICD) is a psychiatric condition characterized by the inability to resist urges or impulses, often leading to harmful behaviors. This case study focuses on Hitarth, a 19-year-old college student from Bhopal, India, who exhibits symptoms of ICD, including irritability, heightened aggression, and impulsive reactions. Data were collected through self-observation, behavioral assessments, and diagnostic tools such as the Impulse Control Questionnaire. The findings suggest that Hitarth suffers from moderate to severe impulse-control issues, necessitating further psychological intervention. This study highlights the importance of early diagnosis and management of ICD in young adults.

Keywords: impulse-control disorder, anger management, college students, behavioral assessment, psychological intervention

Introduction

Impulse-control disorders (ICDs) are a group of psychiatric conditions characterized by the failure to resist urges, temptations, or impulses that may harm oneself or others (American Psychiatric Association [APA], 2013). These disorders are often associated with significant distress and functional impairment. ICDs encompass a range of conditions, including intermittent explosive

disorder (IED), kleptomania, pyromania, and compulsive behaviors such as internet addiction and shopping (Grant & Potenza, 2012).

ICDs are prevalent across various age groups and demographics, with studies indicating a lifetime prevalence of 10.5% for IED in the United States (Coccaro et al., 2004). Similarly, compulsive buying affects 2–8% of the general adult population, with a higher prevalence among females (Black, 2007). Internet addiction, a relatively newer form of ICD, has been reported across all age groups, with increasing rates observed in both males and females (Kuss et al., 2014).

This case study examines the manifestation of ICD in a 19-year-old college student, Hitarth, who exhibits symptoms such as irritability, heightened aggression, and impulsive reactions. The study aims to explore the causes, symptoms, and potential interventions for ICD in young adults.

Methodology

Participant: The participant, Hitarth, is a 19-year-old male college student residing in Bhopal, India. He was selected based on observed symptoms of moderate to severe anger issues and his willingness to participate in the study. Hitarth's history includes frequent involvement in fights, heightened aggression, and a family background with potential genetic predispositions to impulsive behavior.

Data Collection: Data were collected using a mixed-methods approach, including self-observation, behavioral assessments, and diagnostic tools.

1. **Self-Observation:** Hitarth was asked to maintain a journal documenting his daily behaviors, triggers, and coping mechanisms. This provided insights into the frequency, severity, and context of his impulsive reactions.
2. **Observation:** Observational sessions were conducted in various settings, such as classrooms and cafes, to assess Hitarth's interactions and behaviors in real-time.

3. **Diagnostic Tools:** The Impulse Control Questionnaire (ICQ) was administered to quantify Hitarth's level of impulsivity and anger.

Ethical Considerations

Informed consent was obtained from Hitarth prior to the study. Confidentiality was maintained throughout the research process, and the participant was assured that his data would be used solely for academic purposes.

Result Analysis

The analysis revealed that Hitarth exhibits significant symptoms of ICD, including frequent outbursts of anger, heightened aggression, and impulsive decision-making. His self-observation journal indicated that conflicts with peers and academic stress were primary triggers for his impulsive behavior. The ICQ scores confirmed moderate to severe levels of impulsivity, aligning with the diagnostic criteria for ICD (APA, 2013).

Discussion

The findings suggest that Hitarth's impulsive behavior is influenced by a combination of genetic, environmental, and psychological factors. His history of aggression and exposure to negative peer influences during adolescence may have exacerbated his condition. Early intervention, including cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) and anger management techniques, is recommended to address his symptoms and improve his quality of life (Grant & Potenza, 2012).

This study underscores the importance of identifying and addressing ICD in young adults, particularly in high-stress environments such as college. Future research should explore the efficacy of various therapeutic interventions for ICD in diverse populations.

Conclusion

Hitarth's case highlights the challenges associated with impulse-control disorders in young adults. The study emphasizes the need for early diagnosis and intervention to mitigate the adverse effects of ICD on individuals' personal and academic lives. Further research is warranted to develop targeted interventions for this population.

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