



APPA 2013 Spring Meeting Resident Poster Presentation

Apr. 20, 2013

Abstract 13-1-01

Title: Non Suicidal Self Injury in an Insulin Dependent Adolescent with Her Own Lancets

Chair: Suzanna Freerksen, MD

Authors: Loucresie Rupert, MD; Eric Leonhardt, DO

Summary: Non Suicidal Self Injury (NSSI) is defined as the act of deliberately harming your own body not meant as a suicide attempt. It is well-documented among adolescents, who often "cut" with whatever is at hand. In this case study, we explore a situation in which a self-injurer has insulin-dependent diabetes. This 15 year old girl used her own diabetes glucometer lancets to self-injure when she was overcome with negative emotions. By the time she was admitted to the psychiatric hospital, she had a long history of psychiatric symptoms-both performing NSSI with her lancets as well as attempting suicide by neglecting to use her insulin, precipitating life-threatening Diabetic KetoAcidosis (DKA). She did not find psychiatric treatment until the juvenile courts referred her to a psychiatric hospital for evaluation after she came to their attention for truancy. The patient was diagnosed with Diabetes Mellitus type 1 in 2007, which was when her depression and self injury started. Research suggests that poor body image puts an adolescent at risk for NSSI. This case was complicated by the fact that the patient used her lancets to harm herself and the lack of screening for such cases. The quandary facing the treatment providers is how to keep a girl with very unstable blood sugars safe from DKA as well as safe from self-harm. Directly observed insulin injections and use of lancets is an option that is difficult to perform in an outpatient setting. Preventing NSSI in this way also does nothing to alleviate the presenting problem of negative affect causing impulsive self-injury. In point of fact, psychiatry is still seeking a truly effective answer for NSSI. Antipsychotics and Dialectical Behavioral Therapy seemed to be the most promising treatments in the Cochrane review in 2000, but more research is needed