

# A unique presentation of Misidentification Syndrome, a syndrome of subjective doubles

Danielle Egbe, OMS IV; Alexandru Ghilezan, DO; Candace Lynn Perry, MD

**INTRODUCTION:** The syndrome of subjective doubles is a rare form of delusional misidentification syndrome. It describes a person who believes they have a clone, double, or doppelgänger. The syndrome belongs to a group of disorders including: Capgras' syndrome, Frégoli syndrome, and intermetamorphosis syndrome; all psychopathologic phenomena that occur primarily in the setting of psychosis in Schizophrenia. In Capgras Syndrome, the patient expresses the belief that familiar persons have been replaced by clones.

These conditions form a syndrome due to their tendency to co-occur and interchange, and their basic theme is the concept of the double. It has been determined that these syndromes arise from a change in the way the brain processes visual signals, specifically the ability to recognize familiar faces. These delusions have been shown to exist upon face-to-face interaction and subsequently resolve during telephone communications. Capgras syndrome can also be seen in neurodegenerative diseases such as Lewy body dementia and, to a lesser extent, in Parkinson's disease (PD).

**CASE PRESENTATION:** Here we present the case of a 26-year-old male who presented after an acute decompensation and worsening of psychotic features for an involuntary evaluation. The patient reported visualizing several identical replicas of himself. Despite seeing these replicas numerous times, the patient did not express fear of harm by these doubles and noted they often did not speak to him. For example, the patient reported that the 2 officers who detained him prior to hospital admission both appeared and sounded identical to himself.

The patient also expressed the delusion that his mother had been replaced. He believed his mother was cloned and reported a great number of identical clones all portraying his mother. These delusions appeared to be fixed and persisted at the end of inpatient evaluation.

**DISCUSSION:** This case highlights a combination of the syndrome of subjective doubles and Capgras syndrome where the patient has delusions regarding self and others. It is particularly interesting as it illustrates the tendency of these delusions to occur simultaneously. It is atypical that this patient had the impression that he was being pursued by his doubles, as patients with this syndrome historically believe their "doppelgänger" leads an entirely separate life. This showcases the presentations that medical students and clinicians should recognize to identify and manage patients with this rare symptom of psychosis.

**CONCLUSION:** Misidentification Syndrome is described in literature to occur primarily in the setting of psychosis or Schizophrenia. This syndrome encompasses of group of disorders in which patients experience delusions focused on clones or doubles. Early identification and treatment of these psychotic features can lead to resolution of symptoms and better management of patients with this disorder.

## References:

- Christodoulou, G. N. (1978). Course And Prognosis Of The Syndrome Of Doubles. *The Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease*, 166(1), 73-78. doi:10.1097/00005053-197801000-00010
- Draaisma, Douwe. (2009). Echos, Doubles, and Delusions: Capgras Syndrome in Science and Literature. *Style*. 43. 429-441.
- Klein CA, Hirachan S. The masks of identities: who's who? Delusional misidentification syndromes. *J Am Acad Psychiatry Law*. 2014;42(3):369-78. PMID: 25187290.
- Silva JA, Leong GB, Garza-Treviño ES, Le Grand J, Oliva D Jr, Weinstock R, Bowden CL. A cognitive model of dangerous delusional misidentification syndromes. *J Forensic Sci*. 1994 Nov;39(6):1455-67. PMID: 7815025.
- Silva JA, Leong GB, Weinstock R, Penny G. Dangerous delusions of misidentification of the self. *J Forensic Sci*. 1995 Jul;40(4):570-3. PMID: 7595292.
- Barrelle, A., & Luauté, J.P. (2018). Capgras Syndrome and Other Delusional Misidentification Syndromes. *Frontiers of neurology and neuroscience*, 42, 35-43 .

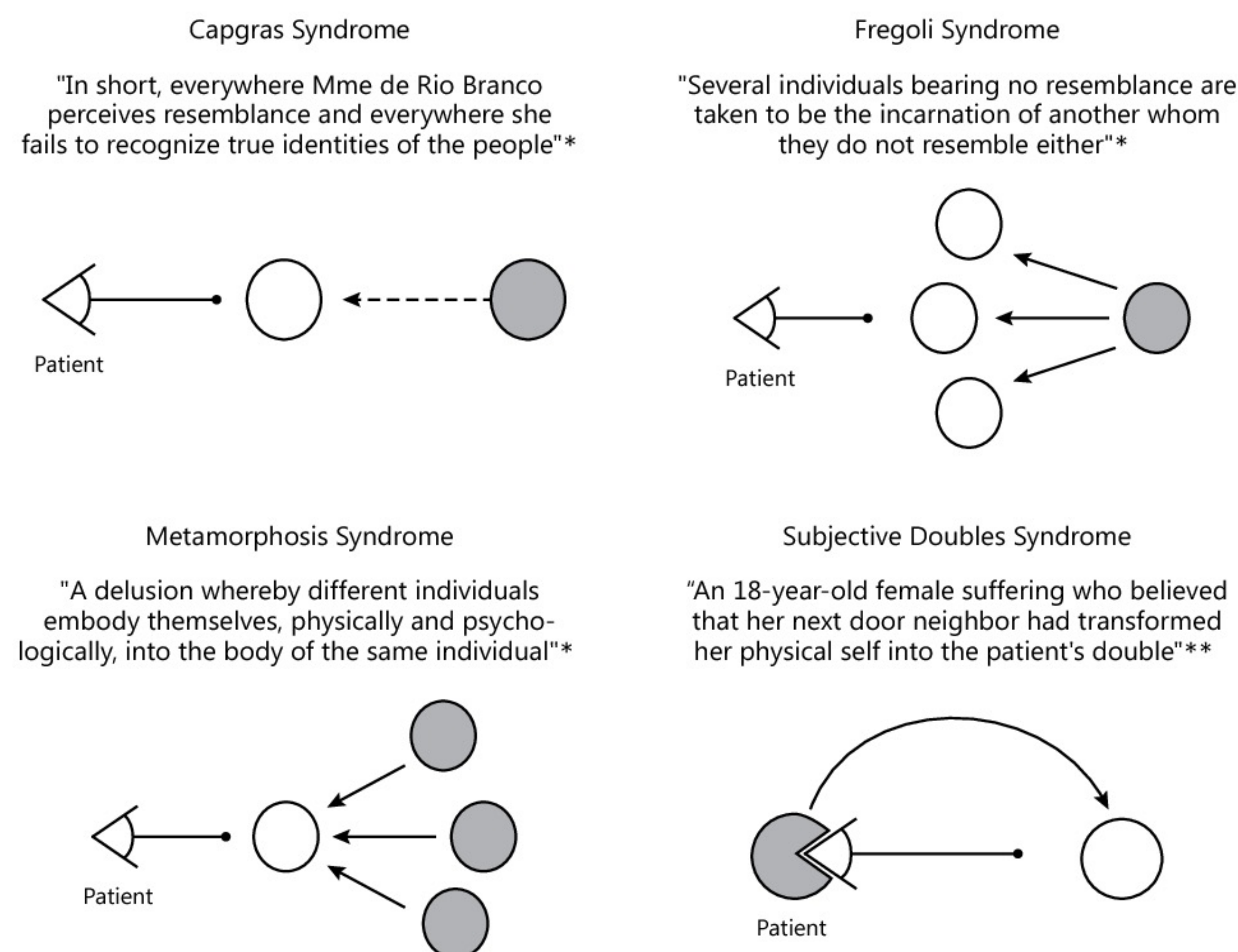


Fig. 1. The main types of Delusional Identification of People. Clear circles represent the person(s) present; dark circles the person(s) identified. \* Ratcliffe [2]; \*\* Christodoulou [4].