

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

TREATMENT BY IMIPRAMINE OF DEAFNESS AND DEPRESSION

Sir,

I would like to share one of my experience while treating a patient suffering from major depression with deafness.

Mr. PCJ aged about 44 years, a clerk in NCC came to consult in June 97 with one year history of decreased interest in family, work & social activities, sleep and appetite. Interview was difficult as he was hard of hearing from both ears. With whatever communication possible by shouting at his right ear, he was found to be depressed, had ideas of hopelessness, worthlessness & a misfit in the present set up. He occasionally had ideas of ending his life.

He was prescribed Imipramine 75 mg per day, alprazolam 0.5 mg twice daily and advised to see an ENT specialist. He came back after 20 days with a relative and treatment records of his deafness. He had bilateral hearing impairment for last 15 years, more marked on the left side. Clinically he was diagnosed as having "healed otitis media with adhesive otitis media left". Audiogram revealed that patient had severe degree of conductive type of hearing loss in both ears more marked on left side. He was referred to neurosurgeon who advised CT scan head which was not done.

Dejected Mr. PCJ came back having lost all hopes of hearing again. Meanwhile, dosage of imipramine was subsequently increased to 125 mg per day. Over a period of few weeks his depression started lifting up. After 8-10 weeks when he came for review I was surprised to know that he could hear from both the ears. Hearing improved to the extent that he could converse on phone, could sense boiling of water from a distance of 3-4 feet.

Whether this deafness was present to a minimum extent and got increased with depression or there was any relationship between the two cannot be commented upon with any certainty but what is sure that the deafness improved with imipramine.

May be this experience of mine, stimulates few to explore the role of imipramine in treating such type of deafness?

V.K. SRIVASTAVA, *Psychiatrist, Mental Hospital, Bareilly, 243 005 (UP).*