

PATHOLOGICAL CONDITIONS OF THE GASTROINTESTINAL TRACT RESULTING FROM ATTEMPTED SUICIDE

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ANNOTATION

According to literature, people with mental illnesses take various substances and chemicals to commit suicide. Such suicidal behavior is often observed among prisoners and military personnel.

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Also, people with mental disorders can swallow piercing and cutting objects. Such patients usually have sewing needles, nails, pieces of metal, stones, and other objects, but to date, no cases of ingestion of nails with a total weight of about 1 kg for the purpose of suicide have been reported. The patient we were observing, a 21-year-old serviceman, swallowed 32 15 cm long iron nails in 1 month, which passed through the esophagus and accumulated in the gastrointestinal tract.

Case description Patient N., 21 years old, served in the armed forces for 4 months. There is no data on hereditary mental illnesses. At a young age, he lagged behind his peers in psychophysical development. He was always under the protection and supervision of his parents. In secondary school, he could not master the curriculum, and frequent behavioral disorders were noted. Later, he studied at a boarding school in a class for mentally retarded children, but was also expelled for conflict, breaking windows, beating peers, and violating discipline. Previously, the patient had never undergone examination or treatment in medical institutions. During the conscription, he was examined by a commission of military doctors of the mobilization department and was recognized as fit for military service. In the military unit's personal file, it is noted that from the first day of service, he showed indiscipline, incompetence, carelessness, and negligence towards his duties. Under various pretexts, he evaded the fulfillment of instructions and assignments. Unable to endure the hardships of military service, he swallowed a large amount of nails for 1 month with the aim of suicide, which he later confessed to the commander, unable to bear the pain, and was sent to a medical battalion for examination, treatment, and determination of fitness for further

service. A day after the examination, he was sent to the Main Clinical Hospital of the Armed Forces for psychiatric examination. During an X-ray examination in the hospital's admission department, about 20 foreign bodies were found in the patient's stomach. He was hospitalized in the combined trauma surgery department, where laparotomy, gastrotomy, and removal of foreign bodies (32 nails) were performed on August 17, 2011. Also, the patient was examined by a psychiatrist for suicidal tendencies, after which she was transferred to a psychiatric unit with a suspected mental retardation, as well as to prevent a new suicide attempt.

During examination and treatment in the psychiatric unit, the patient was sluggish, mocked for inappropriate speech and actions, sometimes crying or laughing without reason. Based on the results of a psychiatric professor's examination in accordance with the International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Health Problems, the 10th revision was given the diagnosis "F70.1 Mental retardation of mild degree with significant behavioral disorders requiring care and treatment.

Physical examination results. Body structure is normal, nutrition is complete. The subcutaneous fat layer is well developed. The skin and visible mucous membranes are of normal color, and a hardened skin scar approximately 20.0×0.8 cm in size along the white line was found on the anterior abdominal wall. Peripheral lymph nodes are not enlarged, mobile, painless. During auscultation, vesicular breathing was heard in the lungs, with no wheezing. Heart tones are clear, rhythmic. Blood pressure 110/70 mm Hg. Pulse is full, rhythmic, heart rate 78 bpm. The abdomen on palpation is soft, painless. The liver and spleen are not enlarged. Knocking on the back is painless on both sides. Urine and stool in normal neurological state consciousness clear. Cranial nerves are normal. No organic changes were observed in the central nervous system. Muscle and tendon reflexes are moderately excited, D=S. Pathological reflexes were absent. The condition in Romberg's pose is stable, with tremors of the fingers and eyelids. Distal hyperhidrosis and persistent red dermographism were observed.

Mental state The patient was oriented in space, situation, time, and their own personality. He spoke tensely, laughing loudly and making inappropriate gestures. He answered the questions briefly, superficially, with excitement and panic. After several sentences, he cried: "I have been sick since childhood. I was always afraid, so they kept me at home, not letting me go anywhere. I don't know what I do, and I don't know what I do in the army!" No perceptual disturbances or delirium were observed. Emotions are weakly expressed. Abstract and logical thinking was absent. He didn't understand the meaning of proverbs and sayings. During the conversation, the mood often changed from pessimistic, hopeless, and helpless to calm or restrained. Can't read or write. He performed simple calculations with difficulty. Has a small amount of knowledge. The

vocabulary is scarce. Simple conclusions and generalizations were difficult for the patient. He is inclined to think concretely. The circle of interests is narrow, needs are primitive. No memory issues observed. Superficial sleep.

Results of special examinations According to abdominal radiography data from August 15, 2011, after 200 ml of barium was administered orally, approximately 20 foreign bodies were found in the stomach, presumably nails about 15 cm long. General blood and urine analysis, blood sugar levels, immunological blood tests, chest fluoroscopy, skull X-ray, and electrocardiography results are normal. According to the radiography data of August 19, 2011, there were no foreign bodies in the abdominal cavity. Psychologist's diagnosis: mild intellectual disability, IQ=68. Psychiatric diagnosis: F70.1 Mental retardation of mild degree with significant behavioral disorders requiring care and treatment. Surgical treatment: laparotomy, gastrotomy, removal of foreign bodies (32 nails) in the postoperative state. By the decision of the military medical commission, patient N. was deemed unfit for military service due to a mental illness. The patient was recommended to register with a psychiatrist at their place of residence and receive preventive treatment in outpatient settings.

Debate As a rule, suicidal behavior at a young age is the result of an experienced situation (mental trauma), therefore the mechanism of its development resembles a short circuit. It is often caused by real causes, it can be provoked by increasing despair, inability to find a way out of a crisis situation, confidence in the impossibility of solving the problem, subjective assessment of the conflict situation. According to the R.J. Gregory and co. hypothesis, self-harm behavior is used as a technique to overcome negative feelings or stress when a person cannot properly handle a difficult situation. The authors called this phenomenon "magical thinking." Suicide cases among people with mental illnesses mainly occur in the presence of such conditions as depression, paranoia, hallucinatory-paranoid state. Suicidal behavior is most common during periods of severe and exhausting depression (especially after discharge from the hospital). However, even in the presence of mental pathologies, regardless of the severity of the condition, suicide cases are not necessarily associated with the symptoms of the disease. In most cases, suicides are committed in the early stages of the disease due to the presence of stereotypical forms of mental activity of the individual or in a state of remission. Most foreign bodies (67-80%) with sizes of 2.5-6.0 cm are naturally excreted from the digestive tract within a week. In this case, depending on the size and type of foreign body, surgical intervention may be required. Studies have shown that patients with mental illnesses can repeatedly swallow foreign bodies. However, cases where a person with a mental disorder swallowed foreign objects consecutively for a month are extremely rare.

Conclusion According to our research and observations, for people with mental illnesses who swallow foreign bodies for the purpose of suicide, the type and shape of the objects used do not matter. In the case under consideration, the patient believed that large nails would kill him quickly. In our opinion, individuals who swallow a large number of objects to commit suicide have a low level.

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