MENTAL DISORDER IN CEREBRAL MALARIA

Psychiatric manifestations of cerebral malaria have been described for a while. The purpose of this study was conducted to describe this type of clinical manifestations of malaria among inpatients admitted at the psychiatric department in Dakar, Senegal from 2004 to 2005 based on personal observations. During this period, 1 male and 3 females, 13 to 22 years old, presented psychiatric disorders represented by mental confusion, delirium syndrome with zoopsia, visual hallucinations, motor agitation associated to other malarial clinical features: fever, headache, shiver, sweating and belious vomiting. All the patients were smear blood positive to Plasmodium falciparum with a parasiteamia between 2524 to 61500 parasites per ml. No psychiatric history was noted among them. Antimalarial treatment was used associated either with Neuroleptic or tranquilliser. All of them recovered after 12 to 31 days of hospitalization (mean length of stay = 20 days). Psychotropic treatment was stopped after 15 days and no relapse was observed after 1 year of follow-up. The authors focus on the importance of psychiatric manifestations of cerebral malaria especially in endemic area like Senegal. They also insist on the possibilities of misdiagnosis and though a delay for an early and effective management.