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YELLOW SMOKE STAIN ON FINGERS IN PATIENT WITH SCHIZOPHRENIA

ŞİZOFRENİ HASTALARININ PARMAKLARINDAKİ SARI DUMAN LEKESİ

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Dear editor,

A 27-year-old unmarried male patient with schizophrenia is treated for 8 years. Negative symptoms were the most prominent. He had poor self-care; long nails and oily hairs. He took bath once in two-three weeks and suffered from mental-motor retardation. He smoked 70-80 cigarettes per day and used to smoke until the end of the cigarettes. Therefore, depending on the tobacco smoke yellowing occurred in the second and third fingers of his right-hand (Figure 1).



Figure 1: Depending on the tobacco smoke yellowing occurred in the second and third fingers of his right-hand

Although he did wash with soap, this yellow stain was not disappeared. He was treated with risperidone (8 mg/day), amisulpride (800 mg/day) and biperiden (4 mg/day). Therapeutic drug monitorization (TDM) of risperidone+9OH was determined as 7.8+20.0 (ng/ml) (therapeutic reference range, TRR: 20 to 60 ng/ml).¹ TDM of amisulpride was determined 234.4 (ng/ml) (TRR: 100 to 320 ng/ml)¹ and TDM of biperiden was determined 0.6 (ng/ml) (TRR: 1 to 6.5 ng/ml).¹ Despite a high dose medicament, low drug levels in the blood were observed.

Smoking rates in patients with schizophrenia has been reported as 74-92%.² It is assumed that smoking reduces negative symptoms and it is kind of self-medication for the patients with schizophrenia.³ It was observed that patients with schizophrenia smoke cigarettes which have higher nicotine and tar content and they used to smoke until the end of the cigarettes.^{3,4} Typically, this is linked to cognitive impairment and dementia. Also it has been suggested that the reason of it might be the presence of high level of nicotine at the end of the cigarette.⁴ It might say that the medical treatment of patients with smoke stains on their fingers is inadequate.

The prevalence of smoking in schizophrenia and cigarette consumption amount is higher than the normal population. In particular, patients with negative symptoms of schizophrenia may use nicotine as self-medication. Updating of medical treatment for patients with smoke stains on fingers due to low blood levels of the drug may be appropriate. TDM should be measured and pharmacotherapy treatment should be reviewed.

Yours sincerely,

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