Body Dysmorphic Disorder
Diagnosis and Management
Overview

- What is Body Image
- What is Body Dysmorphic Disorder?
- Characteristics of BDD with Hair as a Primary Focus
- Identifying BDD Patients
- What to do with a BDD Patient
**Body Image: Definition**

- Body image: a subjective evaluation of your outward appearance, contrasted with an objective evaluation (from someone else)

- More than 50% of American women and 45% of American men are dissatisfied with their overall appearance and body image

- Body image dissatisfaction leads to many appearance enhancing behaviors, including weight loss, exercise, cosmetics use, cosmetic surgery, and hair restoration.

Psychological Conditions with a Body Image Component

- Hypochondria
- Somatic Delusions
- Anorexia Nervosa
- Bulimia
- Gender Identity Disorder
- Sexual Dysfunction
- Schizophrenia
- Depression
- Social Phobia
- Body Dysmorphic Disorder
DSM-IV-TR Diagnostic Criteria for Body Dysmorphic Disorder

- Preoccupation with an imagined or slight defect in appearance. If a slight physical anomaly is present, the person’s concern is markedly excessive.

- The preoccupation causes significant distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning.

Avoidance of social situations or anxiety in social situations, depression, behaviors to modify appearance, etc.
Appearance Complaints in Patients with BDD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hair</th>
<th>Nose</th>
<th>Head shape</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Skin</td>
<td>Eyes</td>
<td>Body build</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lips</td>
<td>Chin</td>
<td>Entire face</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stomach</td>
<td>Teeth</td>
<td>Breasts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Characteristics of BDD

- Age of onset: late adolescence
- Course of illness: chronic, not episodic
- Gender differences: equal ratio

(Crerand et al., Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery, 2006)
Co-morbid Psychopathology

- Mood and anxiety disorders
  - 84-90% lifetime; 54-69% current
- Substance use disorders
  - Up to 47% lifetime; 2-35% current
- Eating disorders
  - 7-14% lifetime; 4% current
- Personality disorders
  - 57-72%

(Crerand et al., PRS, 2006)
Psychological Assessment of Patients

- What are patients’ motivations and expectations and are they realistic?

- Identify patients who have psychiatric conditions that may contraindicate treatment or need further evaluation.

- In-depth evaluation of body image concerns (i.e., is hair loss the only concern, or one among many?)
Assessment of Motivations and Expectations

- **Personal Motivations**
  Ask:
  - “Why are you interested in treatment now?” (self vs. other influences)

- **Social and Treatment Outcome Expectations**
  Ask:
  - “How do you anticipate your life will be different following treatment?”
  - “What do you think you will look like after treatment?”
  - “What if your expectations are not met?”
Assessment of Physical Appearance and Body Image

- **Nature of appearance concern (specific, visible)**
  - “What do you dislike about your appearance?”

- **Degree of distress or preoccupation**
  - “When does the feature bother you the most?”

- **Degree of impact on daily functioning**
  - “Does your concern about your appearance prevent you from doing certain activities?”

- **Previous treatments to improve appearance?**

- **Are there other areas of concern than hair loss?**
Red Flags for Identifying BDD

- Hair concerns that are difficult for others to see
- Unrealistic expectations of treatment outcomes
- Worrying about hair repeatedly throughout the day or for long periods of time (e.g., more than 1 hour)
- Use of camouflaging and cover-up strategies
- Reassurance seeking
- Mirror checking, or avoidance of mirrors
- Avoidance of social situations
- General reduction in quality of life (e.g., no longer socializing)
- Disruption in daily activity (e.g., unemployed or housebound)
Other Red Flags

- The patient presents with detailed descriptions of his or her ideas of how to improve his or her appearance (i.e., essentially telling the professional how to perform the procedure)

- The patient presents with numerous pictures of him- or herself (or pictures of models or Hollywood celebrities), depicting the desired changes in appearance

- In addition to hair loss, the patient has other appearance areas of concern

- Multiple previous consultations or treatments that the patient reports were not effective
BDD?
Further Evaluation and Treatment

If BDD appears to be present:

- Referral for psychological/psychiatric evaluation ask for evaluation of BDD, along with other possible co-morbid conditions (e.g., depression, anxiety)

- If any of these conditions are present, consider referral for psychological treatment (cognitive-behavioral therapy, medications)

- If BDD and other conditions ruled out, consider treatment: extensive pre-treatment briefings regarding expectations of outcome