

Poster

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Poster 11

[P-11-03] Spirit Possession in Psychiatric Perspective, a case study in Indonesia

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Background: Spirit possession goes back as far as history goes. It is related to spiritual, religious and cultural beliefs. Though has been classified as a mental disorder, the majority cases are not reported and or brought to health institutions^{1,2}.

Case Study: Female, 28 yo, moslem, single, post-graduated, with a history of dysthymia and sexual abuse since adulthood, complained of excessive anxiety and worry since 3 months ago. The complaint worsened after she was consulted to a spiritual guru whom performed rituals remotely. She had forced sexual experiences by a genie, to the point of orgasm, every night after being consulted. She felt disturbed and worry, because rationally that such experiences were not possible.

Discussion: Spirit Possession or Possession Trance Disorder (PTD) is a single or episodic change in consciousness described as an experience of being controlled, accompanied by the disturbance of identity related to certain magical powers. Possession can be occurred when it was allowed, usually by a god or spirit that is worshiped, but can also without consent¹. PTD is classified into the dissociative disorder, subcategory of trance and possession disorders, as a condition of temporary loss of consciousness and or identity². In the case above, the helplessness towards the guru's power followed by the consciousness changes that patient denies logically but her instilled values made she believe irrationally. Based on patient's religious perspective, one of the models used to understand an illness is possession by a genie. Although Quran state that genie and their of existence are to worship Allah, there also the bad ones that cause illness^{3,4}. Because her negative expressions about past abusive experience towards her parents are not allowed, dissociation and repression considered more acceptable⁵.

Conclusion: Aside from psychiatric assessment, religious and cultural belief are also needed to understand the spirit possession.