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Dr. Mataix-Cols and Colleagues Reply

TO THE EDITOR: We were pleased to read Dr. Calamari's letter in relation to our recently published review. It highlights methodological and conceptual issues that are unlikely to be easily resolved. Rather than diametrically opposite techniques, factor analysis and categorical approaches, such as cluster analysis, are likely to be complementary because they constitute different ways of looking at the same phenomenon—the heterogeneity of OCD (1). Both have demonstrated their usefulness. For example, tic-related OCD and early-onset OCD both appear to be overlapping and valid subtypes (2). Our preference for factor analytical techniques to address the *classic* symptoms of OCD is twofold.

First, our model hypothesizes that obsessive-compulsive phenomena are normally distributed in the general population (3, 4) and are not limited to the traditional diagnostic boundaries of OCD, i.e., they may be present in many other neurological and psychiatric conditions. Conceptually, a dimensional approach seems to reflect this more accurately. Second, if one adopts a strictly categorical approach, patients need to be unequivocally allocated to only one subtype: a patient is either in cluster X or in cluster Y but not both. We doubt that nature is so exact regarding these symptoms. This is one of the main limitations of the DSM-IV multiaxial system and has been heavily criticized. Along with other theoreticians (5, 6), we propose that a dimensional approach can better deal with the problem of comorbidity or the coexistence of various symptom types in OCD. In short, we reiterate the idea that different methods of analysis are probably likely to yield complementary results. We are glad that Dr. Calamari concurs that considering the heterogeneity of OCD is the direction to take in this important area of research.

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Heart Transplantation in a Schizophrenia Patient

TO THE EDITOR: Mr. A, in the clinical case conference by Stephanie M. Le Melle, M.D., M.S., and Charles Entelis, M.D. (1), is one of many patients with schizophrenia, schizoaffective disorder, and bipolar disorder who have undergone heart transplantation at New York Presbyterian Hospital–Columbia University Medical Center. The case conference provided an opportunity to reflect on what psychiatric consultants to heart transplant programs have learned about helping patients with severe mental illness and other psychosocial risk factors achieve successful heart transplant outcomes.

First, some psychiatric disorders and psychosocial variables do have an effect on transplant outcomes. Recent substance abuse, severe personality disorders, poor global function, and an avoidant coping style predict worse outcomes (2, 3). Second, in some cases, even high-risk patients can do well with expert management. Third, especially in such cases, good family support is invaluable. Fourth, a longitudinal relationship with the transplant team provides an opportunity to assess and modify psychosocial risks much better than evaluation at a single moment in time. Mr. A was undoubtedly a high-risk patient, but he had the benefit of devoted and expert psychiatric care, time to develop a relationship with his transplant cardiologist, and superb support from his family.

I would demur on one point made in the report. There has been no shortage of previous experiences with the development or exacerbation of psychosis in patients after transplantation who were receiving a high dose of corticosteroid immunosuppressant therapy. The role of steroids in precipitating psychosis and mood disorders in heart transplant recipients has been described repeatedly since the late 1960s (4–6).

As we noted previously (2), the presence of psychosocial risk factors should not be reason to prejudicially deny care; rather, it should stimulate efforts to mitigate these risks to provide the best possible care and outcome.

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