

Chocking Fobia: a Case Report

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Introduction: Choking phobia was described by Chorpita, Vitali and Barlow as a condition characterized by intense fear of choking along with avoidance of swallowing solid food, drinking and taking pills in the absence of anatomical or physiological abnormalities. Patients may present a significant weight loss, on which they usually feel uncomfortable

Objectives: Report a patient with choking phobia who was admitted to the Neurology service of Santa Maria Hospital and conduct a brief literature review on the subject.

Methods: Analyse the patient's clinical records and perform a PubMed database review, using 'choking phobia' as keywords.

Results: A 31 years old woman with no history of psychiatric care was admitted to the Neurology service after presenting progressive dysphagia with excessive weight loss. It was possible to determine the sudden onset with progressive worsening (initially the patient was fed only in the presence of other people - due to fear of choking - and lately refused solid food intake). Changes in diagnostic procedures (endoscopy, electromyography and barium meal) were not found. The patient was observed by the Psychiatry service and initiated a treatment with sertraline, supported with cognitive behavioural therapy, which revealed a clear improvement from the resistance to swallowing point of view (currently the patient is able to have lunch / dinner in less than 1 hour).

Conclusions: Choking phobia is a rare and poorly understood disorder, whereby future studies should contribute to a deeper knowledge of these events and their treatment.