

Case panel: Fatigue and Hypothyroid.

Patient: 29yo female.

First office visit:

Chief concerns: anxiety and depression; fatigue, hypothyroid.

OPQRST:

Onset: Anxious and depressed feelings for as long as patient can recall, but worsened 3yr ago after finished school and moving to a new place where she did not know people and felt alone. Symptoms have also increased in the last month. Trauma as a youth may have played a role. Feels that death of her grandmother when she was young may have been a real trigger. At age 11, she was dx with hyperthyroidism (Graves' Disease), and at age 13 she had a thyroid ablation with radioactive iodine treatment due to the Graves', resulting in lifelong hypothyroidism which is treated with levothyroxine. At onset of the Graves', she had fatigue, and the fatigue has gone on ever since, getting worse in the last 3 years.

Palliate/Provoke: Improved by feeling part of something she can believe in. The thought of change relieves the anxious feelings for a short time, but then she spirals downward again after the change has been made. Things that make it worse are striving for answers to her questions of who she is. The same changes that at first make things better, now cause her to feel depressed and stressed. Lying in bed feels good, and in the moments before getting out of bed, she will lie, as if in a cocoon, wrapped up and yet anxious. When this happens, she never wants to get out of bed. At the same time, she feels anxious because she knows she needs to get out of bed.

Quality: Feels loss of self, grief, empty, constant pull back and forth between choices in her life.

Severity: 10/10 (10 being worst). But no thoughts of self harm or death.

Current health rating: 4/10 (10 best)

Last physical exam: 2wk ago, "normal". [Please note: this is an herb school client, so no physical exam was done during the intake.]

Height: 5'7"

Weight: 180lb

Current medications: levothyroxine; Lexapro (patient discontinued 3 days before intake).

Supplements: B-complex

PMH:

11yo: Graves' Disease; had extreme hair loss and fatigue

13yo: Radioactive iodine ablation resulting in complete destruction of thyroid gland.

14yo: Parents divorced and patient began to have extreme bouts of depression and anxiety. Also began thyroid medication at this time. Client took many different antidepressants at this time.

26yo: Finished school and moved to a new town, symptoms of depression and anxiety increased.

Grandmother died.

FH:

Mother: depression, addiction to prescription drugs

Father: drug addict, anger addict, no emotional support growing up.

Maternal Grandmother: breast cancer

Paternal Grandparents: both died of lung cancer due to smoking.

Social history:

14yo: parents divorced, patient shuttled from house to house between parents.

Distant relationship with family now. Has shame around relationship with sister. Recent move to be closer to her partner, though they don't live in same house.

Spiritual belief: none but enjoys meditation, yoga, and prays to a higher power.

What gives the patient joy: nature, outdoors, creativity, connection to others.

Hobbies: doesn't know of any to mention when asked.

Stress level: 8/10 (10 worst) – current stressors: money, move, identity. Improved by meditation, yoga.

Sleep: feels tired all the time. Falls asleep at 11pm-12am, wakes at 3am for a few hours, then finally goes to sleep when she wakes up for work at 6:30am. This causes her to feel anxious and stressed.

Meditation before bed helps.

Exercise: love to run, also loves yoga.

Diet:

breakfast: -best: oatmeal, fruit with peanut butter, eggs, tortilla wrap.

-worst: granola or no breakfast.

Lunch: usually doesn't eat lunch.

Dinner: -best: beef stew with veggies

-worst: sandwich or leftovers. Has lack of desire to eat.

Snacks: fruit, granola bars, cheese, sugary snacks (mostly chocolate).

Oils: olive and coconut

water: doesn't know, at most 16oz/day. No soda or energy drinks.

Caffeine: 2 cups (16oz) of coffee every morning; after noon, a third cup.

Food cravings: sugar, chocolate, pastries and fats.

Recreational drug use: none

Cannabis use: none

Alcohol use: quit drinking for 3yr, but recently started drinking again. 2 beers a day at most.

ROS:

Skin: dry, brittle, and slightly itchy

Nails: brittle and breaking.

Brain: bouts of extreme brain fog, esp in past month, and lack of mental clarity. Poor memory.

Lower GI: constipation throughout life. Has gotten better recently. Dairy makes it worse and causes gas, bloating, and inflammation. Has 1 hard bowel movement/day.

M/Sk: all over muscle fatigue and pain, feeling like she wants to crawl out of her skin. Constant achiness all over body.

Other systems normal.

Second visit: 10 days after first visit

New Complaint: Abdominal pain that is constant.

O: It “has always been there, that is why I didn’t mention it before, I just thought it was “normal”, I guess around the age of 13” (coinciding with thyroid removal). She did say she feels it comes on a bit

stronger after she eats. She could not tell me what foods make it worse.

P: Eating makes it worse (slightly); the only thing that makes it better is having a BM. During her menses things do get a bit worse. Dull crampy pain all over.

Q: “Sharp yet dull pain” right in the middle of her small intestinal area. That is constantly there, it never subsides.

R: It does not radiate anywhere; it stays in the same place all the time.

S: “Nothing serious, about a 2 out of 10 (10 being worst).” It is just always there.

T: Stays the same timing of it never changes.

Secondary Complaint: Irregular menses/ dysmenorrhea.

O: She went through menarche at age 14- no pain at this time. She said that the pain started in her teenage years, but could not place an exact age/date on when it began.

P: Nothing makes it worse or better for the most part. Does take NSAIDS for the pain, which helps.

Q: Crampy, dull menstrual pain. She does notice dark, clumpy blood all the way through menses.

R: Radiates down her legs, and into her lower intestine.

S: 7 out of 10 (10 being worst), fluctuates depending on period. She will go for 3-6 months with no pain and no menstruation. When she does finally have her menses again it will be 5 days long and pretty heavy on the 3rd day (2 diva cups in one day). (Her last date of menstruation was 15 days ago, there is no way that she could be pregnant).

T: The menstrual pain will start with the second day of bleeding and will continue through the length of menses.