

SOUTHWESTERN NEWS

Contact: Ann Harrell
(214) 648-3404
or e-mail: aharre@mednet.swmed.edu

CHILDREN WITH OBSESSIVE-COMPULSIVE DISORDER MAY BE CANDIDATES FOR UT SOUTHWESTERN DRUG STUDY

DALLAS — July 7, 1997 — UT Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas will take part in one of the first nationwide studies to find a more effective way to treat children with obsessive-compulsive disorder.

Although obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) is more often seen in adults, Dr. Graham Emslie, a professor of psychiatry, said this little-understood condition often manifests itself in a number of ways in children and teens.

"Because it is not as common in children as it is in adults, OCD is often not recognized in younger age groups," said Emslie, who holds the Charles E. and Sarah M. Seay Chair in Child Psychiatry. "There is a wide variance in the obsessions and compulsions young persons suffer, and some of these behaviors are often confused with symptoms for other conditions, such as attention deficit disorder with hyperactivity."

UT Southwestern researchers currently are recruiting children aged 8 to 17 with obsessive-compulsive disorder for a study of paroxetine hydrochloride (Paxil), one of a new class of drugs that has been effective for many depressed patients.

Eleven-year-old Corey Hobbs of Dallas, who began treatment for obsessive-compulsive behavior when he was 9, said, "I want people to know more about it. I didn't know anything about it, either, but now I've learned a lot.

"It was Mom who noticed it first. School was getting to be a problem. I was still getting A's, but I was obsessed with doing more and more and more. If I couldn't finish a test, I'd get really upset and keep saying, 'I have to finish, I have to finish!'

"I also knew I was depressed. All I wanted to do at home was clean and clean and clean. I never wanted to go outside and play with my friends."

Besides cleaning, Hobbs was constantly touching or rearranging things. He also kept

(MORE)

OBSESSIVE-COMPULSIVE DISORDER — 2

smelling unpleasant odors and became overly upset when his friends behaved in ways in which he didn't approve.

Other common behaviors associated with obsessive-compulsive disorder include continual counting, repeating activities over and over, excessive list making, hoarding, continual sexual or harmful thoughts, hair pulling and self-mutilation.

Hobbs' physician prescribed an anti-depressant in small doses, and for a while it worked. But the treatment backfired.

"It took away all my worries, and I played too much. I didn't want to do any schoolwork," said Hobbs, who wants to become a veterinarian and knows "you need mostly A's and some B's to get a doctor's degree."

His psychiatrist suggested that he and his family consider the UT Southwestern drug study. With Paxil, he said he is now able to strike a better balance between doing homework and playing with his friends.

During the first 16 weeks of the study, OCD patients are treated with Paxil. During the second 16 weeks, patients who did well on the medication will be divided into two treatment groups. One group will continue taking the drug, and the other group will take a placebo.

For further information about the study, call (214) 640-5916.

###

This news release is available on our World Wide Web home page at
<http://www.swmed.edu/news/newspubs.htm/>