



PSYCHODERMATOLOGY

DELUSIONAL INFESTATION

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Delusional infestation is probably the most difficult clinical situation encountered by dermatologists worldwide. Many of these patients go untreated since they refuse to be referred to a psychiatrist. This situation is tragic because there are several well-known medications that work extremely well for most patients with delusional infestation such as pimozide and risperidone. In this lecture, not only the details on how to use this medication will be discussed, but also how to get these patients to accept these medications. In a nutshell, these patients come to dermatologists not only to try to get validation of their delusional ideations but also because they are hoping for some clinical improvement instead of living in misery. The second motivation can be used skillfully to convince the patient to try medication on a “trial and error” basis while reminding the patient that the etiology of Morgellons disease is unknown. Even though the patients typically accept the medication ambivalently, once the patient experiences improvement, their willingness to take the medication frequently changes dramatically for the better. If the medication like pimozide is optimized with regard to dosage, maintained until practically all symptoms disappear, continued another few months beyond the point of being asymptomatic and tapered slowly to discontinuation, the experience of the speaker has been that most of these patients can be cured with very rare recurrence. Therefore, this tragic condition is imminently treatable if the clinician has the interpersonal skill to convince the patient to undergo treatment, which is the topic of this lecture.

