

Constructing the Understanding of Emerging Clinical Entity of Flirtatious Personality

Flirting has become a modality for initiating courtship or quasi-courtship. Flirting can happen verbally and nonverbally. The use of touch and frequent indulgence in clothing adjustment are other common forms of flirtatious behaviors. The other expression of flirting includes the amount of personal distance kept between individuals. Male and female who lean toward each other or who are at the same body angle have been found to be more seductive.

Flirting is more frequent among younger people in the age group of 18–24 years. The Flirting Report Social Issues Research Centre (www.sirc.org/publik/flirt2.pdf) in their national survey in 2004 showed that males are slightly more flirtatious than females, with more men admitting to seven recent flirtations than women. About 61% have acknowledged having flirted either today or within the past week. The flirting behaviors can happen among individuals who got personality disorders. The person with a histrionic personality disorder also has the characteristic of being flirtatious, seductive, charming, manipulative, impulsive, and lively. They may behave inappropriately with people they meet, even when they are not sexually attracted to them (www.StatPearls.org) [1].

Case Report

Mr. SP, who was a 24-year-old graduate, employed, from middle economic status family, presented himself with the complaint of increased preference for interaction with the opposite sex. The patient got a warning for his glancing behaviors, which have increased for the last four years. Those behaviors had been observed since he was 15 years old. The observations included (a) focusing more on grooming to look impressive; (b) giving smiles or a tendency to interact with the opposite sex; (c) initiating communication to ask their personal details, interests/preferences, and status; and (d) shortening the space between himself and the opposite sex to make her become uncomfortable.

The patient's behaviors used to happen even during his first encounter with others. He reported increased indulgence in masturbations and fantasizing about the opposite sex. He had an increased Internet in accessing videos for enhancing self-presentation and impressing others. He enjoyed indulgence in those behaviors, interacting with the opposite sex, or building friendship with them.

With the Structured Clinical Interview for Personality Disorders, the patient was found to be mixed (histrionic, schizotypal, and narcissistic) personality. He was maintaining well in other domains of psychosocial functioning. He did not have a lifetime/current history of any other clinical psychiatric disorder. He was receptive to receive psychotherapy,

working on minimizing the consequences of his current problems and reducing the indulgence in those behaviors.

Comment

The current case highlights the presence of ego-syntonic flirting behaviors for a treatment consultation. The patient of this present case also meets the first three stages of the five-stage model of courting [2]. Although it was proposed for women, these stages have implications in understanding flirting behavior. These stages use nonverbal gestures to initiate flirting. In attention stage, the individuals use quick glance at and away from people; in the second stage of recognition phase, they use smiling and eyebrow flashes to impress the other; and in the third stage, they initiate conversation with others [2].

People flirt for various reasons, including the desire to increase sexual interaction. The motivational needs associated with flirting are sex (wants to have a physical intimacy); fun (as one of activity to feel good); exploring (modality to experience this behavior); being relational (to enhance intimacy in interaction or relationship); esteem (to enhance one's self-image), and being instrumental (goal of getting something out of the relationship) [3]. The present case also had corroboration from error management theory [4], showing that men tend to overperceive sexual interest from women, while women tend to underperceive sexual interest from men. It also explained the highest percentage of males engaged in this kind of behaviors.

The flirting is strongly related to personality traits such as extroversion, openness, and negatively related to conscientiousness, reflecting the outgoing nature but with a lack of concern for others. Studies also have shown that people with histrionic personality often involve themselves in flirtatious behaviors such as drawing attention to oneself by wearing bright-colored clothing or revealing garments [5]. They tend to be extremely emotionally expressive [6]. Those things got increased expression through online modality.

New media technologies have changed the ways young people interact with one another, and many are learning how to negotiate their romantic and sexual relationships within these new contexts. The Internet makes it feasible for an individual with histrionic personality traits to make more connections with persons. Participants view online mode of communication as something that facilitates planning social activities, maintaining ties with friends, and feeling part of a community [7].

Flirtatious behavior can manifest both offline and online. A greater need exists to look into cross-cultural aspect of

these patterns of behaviors/or media influence. With the understanding of only a single case report as its major limitation, we observed that this patient presented himself with ego-syntonic flirting behaviors. We suggest that this clinical entity needs further qualitative or quantitative exploration to understand this emerging expression of a personality disorder and its implication for management. (The Ethic Committee at National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Science approved the publication of this case study [protocol number = letter dated May 1, 2017, and date of approval = June 17, 2017] with the stipulation of obtaining the informed consent from the patient for the use of his clinical information.)

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Conflicts of Interest

Authors do not have any conflicts of interest in writing this letter.

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Manoj Kumar Sharma, M. Phil, Ph.D.^{1*}, Santosh K. Chaturvedi, M.D.², Sundarnag Ganjekar, M.D.²

Departments of ¹Clinical Psychology and ²Psychiatry, Service for Healthy Use of Technology Clinic, National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences, Bengaluru, Karnataka, India

^{1*}Corresponding author. Bengaluru, Karnataka - 560 029, India.
E-mail: Manoj Kumar Sharma <shutclinic@gmail.com>

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