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QUI NON ZELAT, NON AMAT — COMPULSIVE JEALOUSY IN YOUNG WOMEN

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Qui non zelat, non amat. One who does not burn, does not love - as Saint Augustine states. Jealousy is a troublesome emotion dominating mankind for time beyond all memory.

However, it seems to be unclear, what constitutes normal jealousy and where the boundaries of pathological jealousy should be drawn. From the phenomenological point of view, psychiatrists' attention has always been focused on delusional jealousy, as a psychotic symptom. Obsessional jealousy, where the thought has the quality of obsessional ideation, is the topic of much fewer publications. The first clearly defined cases of obsessional jealousy were published by Mooney in 1965. In 1979, Cobb defined jealous ruminations as obsessive thoughts with the resultant compulsive rituals of checking on spouse. In 2007, Agarwal conducted a Medline search and retrieved no more than 20 relevant publications on this topic.

In this presentation the authors discuss the cases of 3 young (21-27-year-old) women. In all cases, pathological jealousy with clearly obsessive characteristics was the leading or only psychiatric symptom. Two women were successfully treated with low doses of selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (sertraline and fluvoxamine, respectively), while in one case, because of adverse SSRI effects, reversible inhibitor of monoamine oxidase A was administered. Obsessive jealousy, in contrast to delusive one, often affects young people, causing severe difficulties in gender socialisation, lowering the chances of finding an appropriate conjugal partner, hereby markedly worsening the quality of life. Proper differential diagnosis is, however, essential for choosing an adequate and successful treatment option.