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*PANDAS: Can Strep-throat trigger
Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder for
certain children?*

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD) is a psychiatric condition characterized by anxious or intrusive worries and thoughts (obsessions), followed by ritualistic or repetitive behaviors (compulsions) to alleviate them. For 10% of the population with OCD (2% of general population) the onset of OCD symptoms is associated with streptococcal infections or strep throat. Prior studies have indicated that two main areas for executive functioning within the brain are significantly impacted by the symptoms of OCD: the basal ganglia and orbitofrontal cortex. Over the course of the last year, I have had the opportunity to work with an ongoing research study at the University of Minnesota, Fairview-Riverside exploring the impact of PANDAS on neurocognitive functioning. Participants include children ages 6-14 who meet criteria for OCD and/or tic disorders and those who will potentially meet criteria for PANDAS. Two different diagnostic interviews, battery of neurocognitive assessments, and a throat culture are administered to participants during a peak period of symptom presence (exacerbation) and a period of symptom absence (remission). It is hypothesized that there will be a significant decrease in neurocognitive functioning (via the basal ganglia and orbitofrontal cortex) in children with PANDAS during symptom exacerbation as opposed to remission. This would suggest consequences for the children's cognitive executive control (e.g. attention, memory, inhibitory, planning, and decision making skills), during these reoccurring episodes.



Poster Number: Session: