



## Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences Section - 2014

### **I22 Anti-Androgen Treatment in Intellectually Disabled Adolescents With Sexually Deviant Behaviors: Medical and Ethical Implications**

*Ngoctram T. Vo, DO\*, University of Southern California, Institute of Psych, Law, & Behav Sc, PO Box 86125, Los Angeles, CA 90086-0125*

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The goal of this research is to explore the medical and ethical issues of using potentially effective anti-androgen therapy in intellectually disabled adolescent males with sexually deviant behaviors.

This presentation will impact the forensic science community by providing the mechanism for attendees to consider the use of anti-androgen treatment in this population with a greater appreciation of the medical-ethical implications.

A case presentation of an adolescent male, who has mild Intellectual Disability (ID) with sexually deviant behaviors, who was treated with leuprolide will be the premise of this presentation. An exploration of the medical risks and ethics of employing anti-androgen therapy with this population will be discussed. Sexually deviant behaviors have been reported in individuals with ID; such persons are more likely to commit acts against prepubescent male children when compared to perpetrators without ID. Juveniles in general comprise approximately one-quarter of all sexual assault offenders as published by the National Incident-Based Reporting System. Juvenile sex offenders, specifically those who rape and molest victims, are viewed as serious juvenile delinquents and thus subject to punishment as well as clinical treatment (e.g., multisystemic therapy, cognitive behavioral therapy, family therapy, and occasionally medications such as selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors). Anti-androgen treatment has been successful in reducing aberrant sexual behaviors among some adult sex offenders, including those with ID. Adolescents with ID who engage in sexually deviant behaviors may be unable to control their overwhelming impulses and have less cognitive capacity to utilize some of the available psychotherapeutic treatments. Therefore, anti-androgen treatment may be a viable treatment intervention for these individuals.

Literature regarding anti-androgen treatment has focused primarily on adult sex offenders, with very little research and opinions addressing such treatment for adolescent males with ID and sexually deviant behaviors. Numerous medical and ethical issues arise when considering anti-androgen treatment in adolescents with ID. These may include: capacity to consent or assent; parental requests for treatment of aberrant sexual behaviors that do not have the imminent potential of harming others (e.g., inappropriate hugging); and the medical implications of reducing sex hormones in adolescent males. The treatment team, patient, and family/guardian must weigh the risks with the potential benefits of reducing aberrant sexual impulses/behavior, societal protection, and lowered risk of the adolescent being punished criminally for these deviant sexual behaviors (e.g., incarceration, residential placement, and other legal ramifications).

This presentation will review the literature on sexually deviant behaviors in intellectually disabled adolescent males and the above-mentioned medical and ethical concerns arising from anti-androgen treatment which target such behaviors.

From a humanistic perspective, such treatment may benefit this sub-population while protecting society; however, it is imperative that there be careful consideration of the medical risks and ethical issues with using anti-androgen medications in adolescent males.

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#### **Intellectually Disabled, Adolescents, Sexual Deviance**