

Compulsive Body Spaces: Confusions and rationalisations

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Background:

Compulsions are an important but still only superficially understood symptom group of the Tourette syndrome symptomatology. Especially compulsions that are bound to certain objects (e.g. tooth brushes) and spaces (e.g. one's living room) tend to be more confusing for people with Tourette's than simpler tics. This paper attempts to answer why current (and historical) medical and clinical research in Tourette's cannot clear many of these confusions.

Methods:

The methodology of this paper is based on a (1) study and in-depth review of the methodology and invocation of causality and correlation of a broad range of papers on Tourette symptomatology, phenotype studies, and situatedness in the neurological, neuropsychiatric, and psychological research in Tourette's, and (2) on in-depth, qualitative interviews of 15 people with Tourette's focussing on their sense-making narratives of being medicalised and receiving clinical treatment and therapy.

Results and Conclusions:

The analysis suggests that people with Tourette's understanding and knowledge of their compulsions goes through four transformations. These transformations highlight that the neurological, neuropsychiatric, and psychological research in Tourette's can only partially take away the confusions of people with Tourette's around compulsions. The analysis also shows how the onto-epistemological structures that govern these studies play an important part in impasse in the study of compulsions as such. This study then suggests how the medicalisation of compulsions steers people away from asking certain questions that would help them understand their compulsive movements and body. It also implies the necessity of integrating the bodily surroundings as fundamental component to future Tourette's research.