Ganser syndrome

Ms. Buvaneswari. R, Ms. Saraswathi. K. N, Mr. Santosh Kumar. S. K.

Asst Professors, Department of Mental Health Nursing, JSS college of nursing, Mysore

INTRODUCTION:

Ganser syndrome is a type of factitious disorder in which the person mimics behavior that is typical of a mental illness, such as schizophrenia. Ganser syndrome is sometimes called prison psychosis because it was first observed in prisoners. People with factitious disorders act this way because of an inner need to be seen as ill or injured, not to achieve a concrete benefit, such as financial gain. They are even willing to undergo painful or risky tests and operations in order to obtain the sympathy and special attention given to people who are truly ill.

Meaning:

Ganser syndrome is a type of factitious disorder, a mental illness in which a person acts as if he or she has a physical or mental illness when in truth; he or she has caused the symptoms.

A pseudo-psychotic condition typically occurring in individuals feigning insanity and characterized by wrong but related answers to questions.

Incidence:

- Syndrome is more common in men (80 percent) than in women and most often occurs in the late teens and early adult years.

Causes of Ganser syndrome

- A reaction to extreme stress.
- A desire to avoid responsibility or an unpleasant situation.
- Physical problems also might cause symptoms of Ganser syndrome these include alcoholism, head injury, Tourette's syndrome, stroke, and frontal-temporal lobe dementia.
- Most people with this disorder also have a personality disorder, usually antisocial personality disorder or histrionic personality disorder.

Symptoms of Ganser syndrome
- Short-term episodes of odd behavior similar to that shown by people with serious mental illnesses.
- The person might appear confused, make absurd statements, and report hallucinations (the experience of sensing things that are not there; for example, hearing voices).
- A classic symptom of Ganser syndrome is vorbeireden, or approximate answers, in which the person gives nonsense answers to simple questions.
- A person with this disorder might report physical problems, such as an inability to move part of the body, called hysterical paralysis.
- Loss of memory (amnesia) for the events that occurred during an episode is common.

**Diagnosis of Ganser syndrome:**

- Doctors must rule out any possible physical problems—such as stroke, dementia, or head injury—as the cause of the symptoms before considering a diagnosis of Ganser syndrome.
- If the health care provider finds no physical reason for the symptoms, he or she might refer the person to a psychiatrist or psychologist -- mental health professionals who are specially trained to diagnose and treat mental illnesses.
- Psychiatrists and psychologists use a thorough history, physical, laboratory, imagery, and psychological assessment tools to evaluate a person for Ganser syndrome.

**Treatment of Ganser syndrome:**

- The first goal of treatment is to be sure the person does not hurt himself or herself, or others.
- The person might need to be hospitalized if the symptoms are extreme and/or if the person could be dangerous.
- Supportive psychotherapy (a type of counseling), and monitoring for safety and a return of symptoms are the main elements of therapy for Ganser syndrome.
- Medicine usually is not used, unless the person also suffers from depression, anxiety, or a personality disorder.

**Complications of Ganser syndrome:**

- Amnesia or loss of memory, of events that occurred during episodes of the syndrome is the most common complication.
- Some people with Ganser syndrome will suffer a period of depression following a Ganser syndrome episode.

**References:**