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EXPERIENCE

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# A CASE REPORT OF OBSTINATE GAMBLING ADDICTION - AUTHOR'S OWN EXPERIENCE

# LESZEK TOMASZ ROŚ \*\*

#### **ABSTRACT**

Same authors regard gambling as addiction. Detailed psychiatric examination revealed obsessive-compulsive syndrome in patient. The author treated the patient systematically with individual psychotherapy and sertraline from low doses up to the maximal dose (i.e. about 200 mg daily). A complete remission of the obsessive-compulsive syndrome was achieved [23, 12, 11, 6, 31]. A number of indirect proofs [6] demonstrate a significant role of sertraline in the aetiology of obsessive-compulsive syndrome. The most important evidence [6] is the effectiveness of the drugs from the group of selective inhibitors of serotonin central reuptake (SI-5HT) in the treatment of obsessive-compulsive syndrome. Sertraline is safe and effective [6] in the treatment of obsessive-compulsive syndrome. Very numerous authors [23, 12, 11, 6, 31] have used sertraline in the treatment of this syndrome with evidently good effect. Drug doses ranged from 50 to 200 mg daily.

Key words: Gambling, addiction, obsessive-compulsive syndrome, sertraline.

A case report of obstinate gambling addiction - author's own experience

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Gambling is one of the very well known faults of some people. Some authors regard gambling as addiction. It leads in most cases to slow deterioration of a human being, to loss of money, not infrequently to selling of

house furniture necessary for living and even to selling of whole appartments and houses. Gambling is not infrequently the cause of bankruptcy, leading whole family to poverty and extreme destitution. It is commonly known that men succumb to gambling far more frequently than women. Gambling often draws people for very long periods of life - these periods may frequently last for several to several scores of years. Gambling takes various forms worldwide, from card

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playing for money to various gambles, e.g. roulette. A characteristic feature of gambling addiction is the fact that it is always connected with playing for money. At the beginning of the addiction particularly dangerous for the possible future gambler is frequent winning in consecutive plays and rapid gathering of money. In such cases, gambling draws in a victim, that is gambling addiction develops rapidly and permanently. Rapidly growing sum of won money excites, encourages, intrigues, tempts, improves mood and frequently brings euphoria. Then other important matters in life become less interesting and slowly cease to count. Frequently, family, occupational work, various lofty aims in life become for a beginner gambler completely unimportant.

# Case report

Male patient K.K, aged 50 years never received any psychiatric treatment. The patient was born after normal pregnancy and labour. His childhood was moderately successful. The patient's mother was tender, considerate, warm, affective and caring. The father was extremely busy with his occupational work and, therefore, had very little time for his family. Besides that he was rather peremptory, stand-offish, emotionally cold, resolutely imposing his will, with irascible moods, frequently verbally aggressive. Very frequently he used to make small rows over trifles. The patient has two younger sisters with whom, similarly as with his mother, he has very good and heartfelt contacts. His mother is alive, the father died two years ago. In primary school and secondary technical school the patient achieved medium results but he never repeated years. He got married at the age of 24. Presently the patient has one adult daughter who has a decent husband and a child. No mental diseases occurred in the patient's family. The patient gave no history of head trauma and loss of consciousness. He was never abusing alcohol. Out of serious somatic diseases, the patient has received medical treatment for chronic coronary artery disease. His marriage for the first 3-4 years was definitely good. His wife was very hard working, affective, warm, conscientious, caring. For the first 3-4 years the patient had no secrets from his wife. He worked hard as technician mechanic and spent much time with his wife and daughter. Then, patient's gambling became the curse of further life of the couple. After his colleagues' invitation he went to a club to play roulette. The initial series of consecutive winnings and quite great sum of money gathered became the cause of unhappiness of the patient and his family. For the first several months he managed to conceal his addiction from his wife. The patient, since that time, has been feeling a strong obsessive compulsion to go to the club to play roulette. The temptation was much stronger than logical, reasonable thinking. The patient for all these years has had a critical attitude towards his addiction. He has always thought that his gambling is without any sense. Soon his wife learned the truth. The patient no longer concealed his addiction. Several scores of times a day he had obsessive thoughts to go to the club to play roulette. His compulsory going to the club for roulette was regarded by the author as compulsion, i.e. realization of obsessive thoughts. The whole of these manifestations formed chronic obsessive-compulsive syndrome. The patient was losing money ever more often. He sold his car and expensive furniture from his appartment. He was fired from his job since he stole his firm's money to pay debts assumed for paying consecutive roulette losses. He gave his wife no money. His wife's earnings were insufficient to make the ends meet. The patient moved then to his still young parents who supported him and watched that he was not going to play roulette, but this situation humiliated the patient very much. He was guarded by his parents but obsessive thoughts and strong temptation caused that he was clandestinely going out to the club where he continued to play roulette. The formal and emotional contacts with the patient were very good, affective. His current of thoughts was logical, normal. The mood was slightly depressed adequately to patient's living situation. He denied any suicidal ideation. He had numerous obsessive toughts changing into compulsion. Detailed psychiatric examination revealed obsessive-compulsive syndrome. This diagnosis was confirmed by the following scales [23, 12]:

- ICD-10 scale
- Yale-Brown Obsession Scale
- Obsession and Compulsion Scale of the National Institute of Mental Health
- NIMH Global Scale of Obsession and Compulsion
- MAUDSLEY Obsession and Compulsion Inventory

#### Laboratory tests:

- basic laboratory blood and urine analyses gave normal results
- chest radiogram was normal,
- ECG record: medium-degree anteroinferior wall ischaemia in the form of T-wave flattening,
- EEG record was normal.
- eye fundus examination: normal,
- neurological examination: no focal and meningeal symptoms.
- physical examination was normal,
- cranial computed tomography: normal

The author treated the patient systematically with individual psychotherapy and sertraline from low doses up to the maximal dose (i.e. about 200 mg daily). A complete remission of the obsessive-compulsive syndrome was achieved [23, 12, 11, 6, 31].

#### Discussion

Setraline [31] is a selective serotonin central reuptake inhibitor. A number of indirect proofs [6] demonstrate a significant role of sertraline in the aetiology of obsessive-compulsive syndrome. The most important evidence [6] is the effectiveness of the drugs from the group of selective inhibitors of serotonin central reuptake (SI-5HT) in the treatment of obsessive-compulsive syndrome. Sertraline is safe and effective [6] in the treatment of obsessive-compulsive syndrome. Very numerous authors [23, 12, 11, 6, 31] have used sertraline in the treatment of this syndrome with evidently good effect. Drug doses ranged from 50 to 200 mg daily.

However, most authors think that sertraline doses in the treatment of obsessive-compulsive syndrome should be significantly higher than the doses of the drug administered in the treatment of "major depression". Some authors [34] believe that 50 mg daily is sometimes the optimal dose in the treatment of major depression. Other authors [28, 30] prefer sertraline doses of about 100-150 mg daily in the treatment of major depression.

However, many authors [23, 12, 11, 6, 31] think that for effective treatment of obsessive-compulsive syndrome higher sertraline doses are needed, about 150-200 mg daily. Sertraline is a very safe drug [31] and is well tolerated by patients. Therefore, it turned out to be useful in the described patient who has been sufferring from chronic coronary artery disease.

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University of Trieste, Italy

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Double-blind study of the efficacy and safety of sertraline versus fluoxetine in major depression.

Porównanie skuteczności i bezpieczeństwa stosowania sertraliny i fluoksetyny w leczeniu dużej depresji, badanie z wykorzystaniem podwójnie ślepej próby.

Source

International Clinical Psychopharmacology. 8(3): 197-202, 1993 Fall

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Bennie E.H., Mullin J.M., Martindale J.J. Institution:

Leverndale Hospital, Glasgow, UK Title:

A double-blind multicenter trial comparing sertraline and fluoxetine in outpatients with major depression.

Porównanie fluoksetyny i sertraliny w grupie chorych z duża depresja leczonych ambulatoryjnie, badanie wieloośrodkowe z wykorzystaniem metody podwójnie ślepej.

Source

Journal of Clinical Psychiatry. 56 (6): 229-37, 1995 Jun.

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Beshay H., Pumarega A.J.

Institution:

James H. Quillen College of Medicine, East Tennessee State University, Quillen/Mountain Home Veterans Administration Medical Center, Johnson City 37684, USA Title:

Sertraline treatment of mood disorder associated with prednisone: a case report. Leczenie zaburzeń nastroju występujących

podczas podawania prednisonu przy pomocy sertraliny.

Source:

Journal of Child and Adolescent Psychopharmacology. 8 (3): 187-93, 1998

# [4] Authors:

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Institution:

Department of Urology, Medical School of Gazi University, Ankara, Turkey

Sertraline in the treatment of premature ejaculation: a double-blind placebo-controlled study.

Skuteczność sertraliny w leczeniu przedwczesnego wytrysku: badania metodą podwójnej ślepej próby z wykorzystaniem grupy kontrolnej placebo.

Source:

International Urology and Nephrology, 30 (5): 611-5, 1998

#### [5] Authors:

Brady K.I., Sonne S.C., Roberts J.M. Institution:

Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, Medical University of South Carolina, Charleston 29426, USA

Title:

Sertraline treatment of comorbid posttraumatic stress disorder and alcohol dependence.

Leczenie sertraliną w przypadku współwystępowania zespołu stresu pourazowego i uzależnienia od alkoholu.

Source:

Journal of Clinical Psychiatry, 56 (11): 502-5, 1995 Nov.

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Sertraline in the treatment of obsessivecompulsive disorder: two double-blind, placebo-controlled studies. [Review] [40 refs]

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Source:

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Charleston Area Medical Center, West Virginia, USA

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A placebo-controlled comparison of the antidepressant efficacy and effects on sexual functioning of sustained-release bupropione and sertraline.

Porównanie skuteczności działania przeciwdepresyjnego i wpływu na funkcje seksualne bupropionu o przedłużonym uwalnianiu i sertraliny, badanie z użyciem kontroli placebo.

Source:

Clinical Therapeutics. 21 (4): 643-58, 1999 Apr.

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Rhode Island Hospital and Brown University, Providence 02903, USA

Title.

The treatment of chronic depression, part 3: psychosocial functioning before and after treatment with sertraline or imipramine.

Leczenie przewlekłej depresji część 3: funkcjonowanie psychospołeczne przed leczeniem sertraliną lub imipraminą i po jego zakończeniu.

Source:

Journal of Clinical Psychiatry. 59 (11): 608-19, 1998 Nov.

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Department of Neuroscience, Psychiatry, University Hospital, Uppsala, Sweden *Title*:

Personality disorder comorbidity with major depression and response to treatment with sertraline or citalopram.

Zaburzenia osobowości współwystępujące z dużą depresją a skuteczność leczenia sertraliną lub citalopramem.

Source:

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Northwestern University Medical School, Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, Chicago, IL 60611-3317, USA *Title:* 

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Porównanie skuteczności i bezpieczeństwa sertraliny i nortryptyliny w grupie chorych w wieku 70 i więcej lat.

Source

International Psychogeriatrics. 11 (1): 85-99, 1999 Mar.

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Dean Foundation for Health, Research, and Education, Madison, Wis., USA *Title:* 

Double-blind parallel comparison of three dosages of sertraline and placebo in outpatients with obsessive-compulsive disorder.

Porównanie trzech dawek sertraliny i placebo w leczeniu ambulatoryjnym chorych z zespołem obsesyjno-kompulsyjnym; badania z użyciem podwójnie ślepej próby. Source:

Archives of General Psychiatry. 52 (4): 289-96, 1995 Apr.

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Greist J.H., Jefferson J.W., Kobak K.A. Institution:

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A 1 year double-blind placebo-controlled fixed dose study of sertraline in the treatment of obsessive-compulsive disorder. Trwające rok badanie skuteczności sertraliny stosowanej w stałej dawce, w leczeniu zespołu obsesyjno-kompulsyjnego, z wykorzystaniem podwójnie ślepej próby i kontroli placebo.

Source:

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Source:

Psychopharmacology. 110 (1-2): 203-8, 1993

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Predictors of response to acute treatment

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Czynniki pozwalające na przewidywanie reakcji na ostrą fazę leczenia sertraliną lub imipraminą u chorych z przewlekłą lub podwójna depresja.

Source:

Journal of Clinical Psychiatry, 59 (12): 669-75, 1998 Dec.

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Department of Pharmacy, Scott and White Memorial Hospital, Temple, Tex., USA Title:

Luteal phase sertraline treatment for premenstrual dysphoric disorder. Results of a double-blind, placebo-controlled, crossover study.

Podawanie sertraliny w fazie lutealnej cyklu w leczeniu zespołu dysforii przedmiesiączkowej. Wyniki krzyżowego badania z wykorzystaniem podwójnie ślepej próby i kontroli placebo.

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American Journal of Psychiatry. 152 (9): 1368-71, 1995 Sep.

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An open trial of sertraline in personality disorder in patients with impulsive aggression. Otwarte badania sertraliny u pacjentów z zaburzeniami osobowości z towarzyszącą impulsywną agresją.

Source:

Journal of Clinical Psychiatry. 55 (4): 137-41, 1994 Apr.

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Institution:

Department of Psychiatry and Human Behavior, Butler Hospital, Brown University, Providence, RJ 02912, USA

Title:

The treatment of chronic depression, part 2: a double-blind, randomized trial of sertraline and imipramine.

Leczenie przewlekłej depresji część 2: porównanie skuteczności sertraliny i imipraminy z wykorzystaniem podwójnie ślepej próby i losowym podziałem na grupy.

Source:

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Neuropsychiatry, Neuropsychology and Behavioral Neurology, 11 (3): 157-63, 1998 Jul

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Major depression and its response to sertraline in primary care vs. Psychiatric office practice patients, results of an open-label trial in Argentina.

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Source:

Psychiatrica Scandinavica. 88 (4): 300-1, 1993 Oct.

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International Clinical Psychopharmacology. 10 (3): 129-41, 1996 Sep.

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Title:

Placebo - controlled study of sertraline in depressed recently abstinent alcoholics.

Ocena skuteczności sertraliny w grupie osób od niedawna zachowujących abstynencję od alkoholu; badanie z wykorzystaniem grupy kontrolnej placebo.

Source:

Biological Psychiatry. 44 (7): 633-6, 1998 Oct 1

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Leczenie depresji przewlekłej, część 1: plan badania i uzasadnienie porównawczej oceny skuteczności sertraliny i imipraminy jako kuracji ostrych, kontynuowanych i podtrzymujących.

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Jakość życia: doświadczenia z sertraliną. Source:

International Clinical Psychopharmacology. 9 Suppl 3: 27-31, 1994 Jun.

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Title:

Sertraline in social phobia.

Sertralina w fobii społecznej

Source:

Anxiety. 1(4): 196-8, 1994-95

#### [40] Authors:

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