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## CORRESPONDENCE

Content

Psychogenic Sneezing in Children

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### PSYCHOGENIC SNEEZING IN CHILDREN

De Sousa's case report on childhood psychogenic sneezing<sup>1</sup> reminds professionals about an important childhood condition, which is often considered as a rare occurrence. Although Butlani and O'Connell<sup>2</sup> argue that it is not rare and held the opinion that functional respiratory disorders are common and affect mostly children, adolescents, and young adults, resulting in considerable morbidity and contributing significantly to patient and physician cost and frustration. A history of a psychiatric disorder with temporally related psychogenic stressors is frequently found in these cases. Professionals disagree on the technical classification of some of these conditions (ie, psychosomatic versus somatoform), but there is agreement that treatment directed toward underlying stressors should be the cornerstone of therapy.

Intractable paroxysmal sneezing is a clinical entity that was first described in 1949<sup>3</sup>.

According to Bhatia et al (2004), there have been more than 40 cases reported, mainly among adolescents and children and of these, majority were psychogenic in origin<sup>4</sup>. Careful history, presentation, evaluation of psychosocial factors and psychodynamic formulation is often required. Goplan and Browning<sup>5</sup> advise on use of topical nasal anaesthesia for control of symptoms – that may help to differentiate psychogenic sneezing from organic sneezing. Various treatment modalities have been suggested and used in these cases. A trial

of isotonic sodium chloride solution with suggestion therapy has been successfully tried to rid the patients of their intractable sneezing, in two cases<sup>6</sup>. I was briefly involved with a case of a young child, few years back, which presented with psychogenic sneezing and treated by my clinical psychologist colleague successfully with suggestion therapy. No pharmacological treatment was required. We did not report the case.

### REFERENCES

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