

# Psychiatric Neurosurgery

Surgical interventions such as [stereotactic radiosurgery](#) and magnetic resonance-guided focused ultrasound, and neuromodulatory interventions such as deep brain stimulation (DBS) and vagal nerve stimulation, are under investigation to remediate psychiatric conditions resistant to conventional therapies involving drugs and psychological supports.

Given the complicated history of psychiatric neurosurgery and its renaissance today, we sought to examine current perceptions and predictions about the field among practicing functional neurosurgeons.

We designed a 51-question online survey comprising Likert-type, multiple-choice, and rank-order questions and distributed it to members of the American Society for Stereotactic and Functional Neurosurgery (ASSFN). Descriptive and inferential statistical analyses were performed on the data.

We received 38 completed surveys. Half ( $n = 19$ ) of responders reported devoting at least a portion of their clinical practice to psychiatric neurosurgery, utilizing DBS and treating obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) most frequently overall. Respondents indicated that psychiatric neurosurgery is more medically effective (OR 0,  $p = 0.03242$ , two-sided Fisher's exact test) and has clearer clinical indications for the treatment of OCD than for the treatment of depression (OR 0.09775,  $p = 0.005137$ , two-sided Fisher's exact test). Seventy-one percent of all respondents ( $n = 27$ ) supported the clinical utility of ablative surgery in modern neuropsychiatric practice, 87% ( $n = 33$ ) agreed that ablative procedures constitute a valid treatment alternative to DBS for some patients, and 61% ( $n = 23$ ) agreed that ablative surgery may be an acceptable treatment option for patients who are unlikely to comply with postoperative care.

This up-to-date account of practices, perceptions, and predictions about psychiatric neurosurgery contributes to the knowledge about evolving attitudes over time and informs priorities for education and further surgical innovation on the psychiatric neurosurgery landscape <sup>1)</sup>

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Cabrera et al. analyzed 1142 comments from 108 articles dealing with psychopharmacological and psychiatric neurosurgery interventions on websites of major circulation USA newspapers and magazines published between 2005 and 2015. Personal anecdote, medical professional issues, medicalization, social issues, disadvantages, scientific issues and cautionary realism were among the main themes raised by commenters. The insights derived from the comments can contribute to improving communication between professionals and the public as well as to incorporating the public's views in policy decisions about psychiatric interventions <sup>2)</sup>.

<sup>1)</sup>

Cabrera LY, Courchesne C, Kiss ZHT, Illes J. Clinical Perspectives on Psychiatric Neurosurgery. *Stereotact Funct Neurosurg*. 2020 Jan 17:1-8. doi: 10.1159/000505080. [Epub ahead of print] PubMed PMID: 31955163.

<sup>2)</sup>

Cabrera LY, Brandt M, McKenzie R, Bluhm R. Online comments about psychiatric neurosurgery and psychopharmacological interventions: Public perceptions and concerns. *Soc Sci Med*. 2018 Nov 12;220:184-192. doi: 10.1016/j.socscimed.2018.11.021. [Epub ahead of print] PubMed PMID: 30453110.

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