

The reward system in obsessive-compulsive disorder

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Obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) is primarily conceived as an anxiety disorder but has features resembling addictive behavior. Patients with OCD may develop dependency upon compulsive behaviors because of the rewarding effects following reduction of obsession-induced anxiety. Reward processing is critically dependent on ventral striatal-orbitofrontal circuitry. In this lecture I will discuss brain-imaging studies that have identified abnormal activation within this circuitry in OCD patients, including new preliminary data on modulation of the reward circuitry with deep brain stimulation.