Disclosures

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Setting the Stage

- Shopping is a major leisure activity in the US
- People spend more time in malls than any other place except home/office
- Provides pleasure and relaxation
- For some, excessive shopping can lead to a clinical disorder we call *compulsive shopping* or *compulsive buying*
The Earliest Description of CS

- 1915: earliest clinical description by Emil Kraepelin (“oniomania” or “buying mania”)
- 1924: appeared in Eugen Bleuler’s *Textbook of Psychiatry*
  - Listed as example of “reactive impulse” or “impulsive insanity”

Emil Kraepelin 1856-1926
“As a last category, Kraepelin mentions the buying maniacs (oniomaniacs) in whom even buying is compulsive and leads to senseless contraction of debts .... According to Kraepelin, here, too, it always involves women.... The particular element is impulsiveness....The patients are absolutely incapable to think differently and to conceive the senseless consequences of their act, and the possibilities of not doing it.” (p. 540).
Definitions: Consumer Behaviorists

Faber and O’Guinn (1989): defined the disorder as “chronic buying episodes of a somewhat stereotyped fashion in which the consumer feels unable to stop or significantly moderate his behavior” (p. 738).

Edwards (1993): suggested that compulsive buying is an “abnormal form of shopping and spending in which the afflicted consumer has an overpowering uncontrollable, chronic and repetitive urge to shop and spend…. ” (p.67).
Classification Debate

- Drug/alcohol addiction
  (Glatt and Cook, 1987; Krych, 1989; Scherhorn et al., 1990)

- Obsessive-compulsive spectrum
  (Hollander, 1993; Frost et al., 1998)

- Disorder of impulse control
  (Christenson et al., 1994; Black, 2001)

- Behavioral addiction
  (Holden, 2001; Hollander and Allen, 2006)
CS: Operational Definition

(McElroy et al., 1994)

1. Preoccupation or maladaptive buying/shopping as indicated by one of the following:

- Frequent preoccupation or impulses that are experienced as irresistible, intrusive, and/or senseless
- Frequent buying of more than can be afforded, of items that are not needed, or shopping for longer periods of time than intended

- Evidence of marked distress, time consumption, significant interference with social or occupational functioning, or financial problems

2. Does not occur exclusively during periods of hypomania or mania
Compulsive Shopping Throughout History

- Marie Antoinette
- Mary Todd Lincoln
- William Randolph Hearst
- Jackie Kennedy Onassis
- Imelda Marcos
- Princess Diana
“He (Ari) threw the bill on the table and clutched his throat. I’ve had it up to here with her...all she does is spend, spend, spend...”

Occurs Worldwide

Found mainly in developed countries:

Brazil
Canada
France
Germany
Holland
South Korea
Spain
UK
USA
Exceptions to the Rule

“Let me tell you about the very rich. They are different than you and me. They possess and enjoy early, and it does something to them…."

F. Scott Fitzgerald (1896-1940)

Imelda Marcos
Prevalence Rates: USA

- **College students**
  - 16% Magee (1994)
  - 12% Hessey and Smith (1996)
  - 6% Roberts (1998)

- **Psychiatric inpatients**
  - 9.3% Grant et al. (2005)

- **General population**
  - 2%-8% Faber and O’Guinn (1992)
  - 5.8% Koran et al. (2006)
Gender Distribution

- 80% - 95% female preponderance
- Ratio consistent in clinical studies and community samples (except Koran et al., 2006)
- Men may be underrepresented

Who’s Minding the Store? 1963

(Black, 2007)
Age of Onset

- Late teens/early 20’s
- Corresponds with emancipation from the family and ability to obtain credit
- Chronic or recurrent

(Black, 2007)
Psychiatric Comorbidity in CS

- Mood disorders: 21-95%
- Anxiety disorders: 41-80%
- Eating disorders: 8-35%
- Substance use disorders: 21-46%
- Impulse control disorders: 21-40%

(Black, 2007)
Lifetime Comorbidity in CS

(Black et al., 1998)
Axis II Comorbidity in CS

- OCPD 22%
- BPD 15%
- Avoidant 15%

*No special “shopping” personality

(Black, 2007)
“They rely on other people for affirmation and esteem regulation, and become vulnerably dependent on appearance or possessions to positively influence others.”

(Krueger, 1988)
Severity

Greater severity associated with:
- Axis I/Axis II comorbidity
- Lower gross income
- Smaller % of income spent on sale items

(Black et al., 2001)
Typical Pattern of CS

- Regular behavior
- Increased on holidays/birthdays
- Shop alone
- Shop for themselves/family
- Purchase multiples of items
- Multiple shopping venues (stores, catalogues, internet)

(Black, 2007)
Typical Pattern
Experience the Emotion

The “Up” Side:
- Happiness
- Power
- Elation
- Release of tension
- Gratification
- Sexual excitation

The “Down” Side:
- Guilt
- Sadness
- Loss of credit
- Anger
- Indifference
- Frustration

(Schlosser et al., 1994; Christenson et al., 1994)
Experience the Emotion
Evidence of Impairment: The Slippery Slope

• Subjective distress
• Lying
• Family discord
• Social impairment
• Work-related problems
• Financial distress
• Legal issues

(Christenson et al., 1994; Black, 2007)
The Family Tree

First-degree relatives compulsive shoppers likely to have:

- Depression
- Alcoholism
- Drug use disorder

(Black et al. 1998)
Why do People Shop Compulsively?

- Societal factors
  - market economy
  - available goods
  - disposable income
- Genetic predisposition
- Personal psychology
- Neurobiology
Show me the money!

Clothing 96%  Shoes 75%

Makeup 33%  Jewelry 42%

CDs 21%  Collectables 25%

(Christenson et al., 1994)
Assessment of Compulsive Shopping

- Do you feel overly preoccupied with shopping and spending?
- Do you ever feel that your shopping behavior is excessive, inappropriate, or uncontrolled?
- Have your shopping desires, urges, behaviors, or fantasies been overly time-consuming, caused you to feel upset or guilty, or led to serious problems in your life?
Measurement of Compulsive Shopping

- Compulsive Buying Scale (Faber and O’Guinn, 1992)
- Yale-Brown Obsessive-Compulsive Scale Shopping Version (Monahan et al., 1996)
- Minnesota Impulsive Disorders Interview (Christenson et al., 1994)
Differential Diagnosis

- Must rule out potential medical causes for the behavior.
- Must rule out bipolar disorder
- Must consider that not all excessive shopping behavior is pathological, for example:
  - Holiday shopping
  - Newly divorced
  - Lottery winners
Treatment of CS

• No standard treatments
• Empirical data are limited
• Both medication and psychotherapy have been recommended. Of the latter:
  – Psychoanalytic
  – Cognitive-behavioral
  – Exposure and response prevention

(Benson, 2001)
Treatment of CS

Group CBT
- Damon (1988)
- Burgard and Mitchell (2000)
- Villarino et al. (2001)
- Benson and Gengler (2004)
- Mitchell et al. (2006)
  - RCT, n=39
  - Improvement maintained for 6 months
No Approved Medications

Open-label
- Black et al., 1997 fluvoxamine 90% response
- Koran et al., 2002 citalopram 80% response

Double-blind
- Black et al., 2000 fluvoxamine Fl = placebo
- Ninan et al., 2000 fluvoxamine Fl = placebo

Open-label/Double-blind extension
- Koran et al., 2003 citalopram Cit>placebo
- Koran et al., 2005 escitalopram Esc = placebo

Case reports
- Kim, 1998 naltrexone +
- Grant, 2003 naltrexone +
Other Approaches

- Marital/family therapy
- Credit/financial counseling
- 12-step programs
- Simplicity circles
- Self-help books ("bibliotherapy")

(Benson, 2001)
My Personal Advice
(Kuzma and Black, 2006)

- Admit the problem
- Rid yourself of credit cards/checkbooks
- Shop only when accompanied
- Get a life!
Summary: The Buck Stops Here!

- Common in developed countries
- Early onset
- Comorbid depression and anxiety
- Family pattern of depression and SUDs
- Regular and solitary shopping pattern
- No standard treatments
  - Group CBT appears promising.
- Medication studies are ongoing
References

Thank you!
Questions?