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***Cannibalism – a psychopathological issue: a comprehensive review***

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### **Abstract:**

Cannibalism (CBM) is a type of psychopathological condition, in which one human being consumes the flesh of another. This follows signs like cannibalistic urges, paranoia and psychological vulnerabilities. On behalf of psychology of cannibalism, there are various types: a) Nutritional b) Ritual c) Pathological d) Medicinal e) Auto-cannibalism. The control or the stewardship of these condition is carried out by using growth hormones or insulin like growth factor 1. This condition can be overcome by proper awareness and by improving the efficiency by which the body handles the nutrition supplementation. Also includes the medico-legal aspects related to cannibalism.

### **Keywords:**

Cannibalism, Anthropophagy, Kleptoparasitism, Wendigo Psychosis

## 1. Introduction:

Human cannibalism is subjected to morbid captivations (1). CBM is a type of violent behaviour of human beings most often related to the psychiatric disorders (2), in which it refers to the devouring of the flesh of one human being to another (3), and that it exclusively deep rooted to certain cultural and mythological belief of the Algonquian speaking tribes, which closely resembles Wendigo Psychosis (3). Wendigo Psychosis act as a sign of loss of one's humanity, and which is depicted by psychiatric manifestations like anxiety, hallucinations, cannibalistic urges, paranoia and psychological vulnerabilities. Cannibalism can also be known as 'Witiko mala' or 'Anthropophagy', which came from the Greek word *anthropos*(man) and *phagein* (to eat) (4,2).

The preview of cannibalism is not based on the homogenous behaviour, instead they embraced on a range of practices, with its own psychological basis. (1)

## 2. Background:

Cannibalism exists before thousands of years; the anthropological records insinuates that the phenomenon dates to prehistory. In 1492, Columbus while exploring the New World, he noted that the native *Caribales* of Bahamas have devoured upon the male war prisoners, by which the forename give rise to the modern term *Cannibal*. There is certain evidence that Neanderthals used to practice cannibalism as a part of their custom. (4) The indication and evidences obtained from the assemblage analyses that modifications in the types of cannibalism will occur and in course of time, it will become much more standardized and more information about their cultural aspects can also be studied. (9)

## 3. Types of cannibalism:

On behalf of psychology of cannibalism, there are various types: a) Nutritional b) Ritual c) Pathological d) Medicinal e) Auto-cannibalism

1. Nutritional or Famine-Induced Cannibalism is connected to the usage of human flesh strictly for its caloric contents, more readily at the time of acute starvation, such as in times of extreme situations such as famine or in life threatening conditions in which survival is preponderant.
2. Ritual Cannibalism is related to the cultural practices that contain cannibalistic customs as a part of religious rites, this type of cannibalism is apparent in other non-criminal

activities such as sacrificial or survival cannibalism, and are contemplated as cultural taboos.

3. Pathological Cannibalism is attributed to some form of psychopathological conditions such as psychotic issues or paraphilia. (3)
4. Medicinal Cannibalism is based on the consumption of human tissues and blood to promote for medicinal purposes. For example, in 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries Egyptians dispensed with various remedies contained with human blood, fats and bones from the mummies. (5)
5. Auto-cannibalism, also known as autosarcophagy or self-cannibalism, which is delineated by the consumption of one's own flesh, which occurs mainly due to moderate-severe brain developmental disabilities. (6) Cannibalism is a psychopathological phenomenon imputed to psychiatric conditions and those remaining are influenced by sociocultural dynamics; individual psychodynamics and various other environmental factors, and as a survival instinct as a result of trauma. (3)

### 3.1. Classifications:

1. Endocannibalism is defined as consumption of someone inside one's social group or community, which might involve religious beliefs or a need for survival. The main motive for the endocannibalism basis is for the nutritional aspects or on basis of their cultural beliefs.
2. Exocannibalism is defined as consumption of person outside of one's social group, including practices of eating one's enemy to obtain the qualities that the victim possesses or to exhibit their dominance. (4,5,)

### 3.2. Management:

The growth hormones have direct actions like lipolysis and insulin antagonism, which are mediated by insulin like growth factor 1 (IGF – 1). During the time of fasting and sickness these hormones experiences adaptive changes. The indirect anabolic mechanism of action of growth hormones gets affected and reduced. But the boosted basal growth hormone concentration promotes lipolysis and insulin antagonism, these changes may benefit the fasting and sick patients by delivering the metabolic fuels, but this action led to the switching off of the protein synthesis.

The treatment using the growth hormones or insulin like growth factor 1 (GF – 1) prevails the prospect of preventing nutritional cannibalism and auto-cannibalism by improving the efficiency by which the body handles the nutrition supplementation. (7)

#### **4. Difference between kleptoparasitism & cannibalism:**

Kleptoparasitism (KP) is a form of anthropomorphic nuance such as encroachment and using others as truffle pigs. There are three distinct varieties of Kleptoparasitism (KP): overt aggression (use force or threat to gain the resources); Scramble (one or more individual hunts for the resource but in an open scramble the non-hunters exploit the discovered resources; Stealth (individuals takes the resources but avoid interaction with the host).

Kleptoparasitism (KP) is a form of parasitic feeding technique in which one individual deliberately takes food from another, whereas cannibalism, is a type of psychopathological disorder in which one individual consumes the flesh of their own species. Kleptoparasitism falls under the category of parasitism meanwhile cannibalism constitute to a type of predation. (8)

##### **4.1. Medico-legal issues:**

Legal issues may occur, on the basis of whether the victim was killed before consumption (Homicidal Cannibalism); cannibalism occurred after death (Necro-cannibalism), or removal of tissues, limbs or reaping the flesh from the victim while they are alive. (5)

#### **5. Summary:**

Cannibalism (CBM) is a type of psychopathological disorder, caused due to the change in the cognitive and behavioural changes made by certain situations like starvation, cultural belief or the neuronal impairment occurred in a patient. CBM is now almost rare, even though evidences show its being practiced as a part of certain cultural belief. This condition can be differentiated on basis of the types and it can be classified on the basis of community that they consume for CBM. The selection of management option for CBM also dependents on the patient cause. So, we have to categorize CBM and analyse the cause prior to the start of management of such conditions.

#### **6. Acknowledgement:**

We would like to express our deepest gratitude and sincere thanks to our family members, who helped us a lot in finalizing this review within the limited time frame. We also take this opportunity to thank our principal Dr. A.P Basavarajappa who offered us to acquire knowledge from this institution. The blessing and leadership given by him shall carry us a long way in our careers.

### 6.1. Abbreviations:

Sl.no.	Abbreviations	Expansion
01.	CBM	Cannibalism
02.	KP	Kleptoparasitism
03.	GF – 1	Growth Factor – 1

### 7. References:

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