Reviewer's report

Title: A diagnostic dilemma between psychosis and PTSD: a case report

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Reviewer: Kim T Mueser

Which of the following best describes what type of case report this is?: New associations or variations in disease processes

Has the case been reported coherently?: Yes

Is the case report authentic?: Yes

Is the case report ethical?: Yes

Is there any missing information that you think must be added before publication?: Yes

Is this case worth reporting?: Yes

Is the case report persuasive?: Yes

Does the case report have explanatory value?: Yes

Does the case report have diagnostic value?: Yes

Will the case report make a difference to clinical practice?: Yes

Is the anonymity of the patient protected?: Yes

Comments to authors:

This is an interesting, well-written, thought-provoking case report that describes a woman with PTSD who also presented with prominent psychotic symptoms. The case report briefly reviews the research literature on psychotic symptoms in PTSD, and describes the treatment of the case, mainly in terms of pharmacological treatment. The case illustrates an important clinical dilemma that has been receiving growing attention in the research literature. This case may help to underscore the importance of the clinical phenomenon of psychosis in PTSD, and points the field in useful directions for future clinical and research work on this topic.

There is one significant limitation to the case report in its present form. The report describes the pharmacological treatment of the patient’s psychotic symptoms, and notes improvement in these symptoms but not in PTSD symptoms.
However, PTSD was not targeted for treatment in this patient, nor do the authors consider the potential value of treating the client’s PTSD. There is a growing literature suggesting that the psychotherapeutic treatment of PTSD in people with psychotic symptoms is both feasible and effective. Waldfogel, and Mueser (1988) presented a case in which exposure therapy was successful in treating both PTSD symptoms and associated psychotic symptoms in a veteran. Mueser, Rosenberg, and colleagues have developed a cognitive behavioral treatment program for PTSD in patients with severe psychiatric disorders, including those with psychotic symptoms, with research supporting both feasibility and beneficial effects. Frueh and colleagues have developed a different treatment model that combines skill training with exposure therapy for patients with schizophrenia and PTSD. Thus, the report would benefit from some discussion of psychotherapeutic interventions for PTSD that have been developed for people with special challenges, such as psychotic symptoms.


Quality of written English: Acceptable
Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.