



Remember Terri Schiavo and the Coma Question? Is There Hope? New Findings About Vegetative State Revealed by Clinical Study

Glycoscience Lesson #11

by JC Spencer

As Terri Schiavo lay in a minimally conscious state, her father and I talked about her condition and how we wanted to feed her the discoveries of Glycoscience. He was in agreement and assured me that the canister of Smart Sugars was near her bedside awaiting legal permission to place them in her feeding tube. Instead, a Florida court, at the request of her estranged husband, ruled to remove her feeding tube. She died an inhumane death thirteen days later (March 31, 2005) from starvation. I wept. Terri represented many individuals neglected by medicine and society.

Lancet, the leading medical journal, published a new study (April 16, 2014) with individuals in vegetative or near vegetative state. The validation study used two neuro-imaging-based diagnostic methods: PET imaging and functional MRI (fMRI).

The study found that a significant number of people labeled vegetative had received an incorrect diagnosis and actually had some degree of consciousness and potential to improve. Previous studies, using electroencephalogram machines and MRI scanners also found signs of consciousness in supposedly vegetative patients.

Dr. Steven Laureys, is an author of the new study and director of the Coma Science Group at the University of Liège in Belgium. Dr. Laureys and his colleagues studied 122 patients with brain injuries, (two groups 81 and 41). The group of 41 had been declared vegetative — awake but with no behavioral signs of awareness. The imaging tests found minimal consciousness in 13 of the 41 vegetative patients. After a year, nine of the 13 had progressed into “minimally conscious states or a higher level of consciousness. Researchers say the findings support the idea that some patients who appear vegetative have some level of consciousness that they cannot show — perhaps low, but real — and the potential to recover. The initial diagnoses for both groups were made by doctors performing neurological exams that included a coma recovery scale guide which is considered the most reliable assessment.

Dr. Joseph J. Fins, the chief of the medical ethics division at Weill Cornell Medical College in New York, while not involved in the study, commented that PET scans can help doctors resolve puzzling cases in which patients are unresponsive but have unexpectedly healthy-looking brains. Drs Laureys and Fins noted that patients are often labeled vegetative and are sent to nursing homes where no effort is made to rehabilitate them, and where emerging consciousness might not even be recognized. “The first thing we owe these people is a credible diagnosis,” Dr. Fins said.

We do not want to hold out false hope but we want to do all we can. I have personally witnessed other people at death’s doors who survived and today live productive lives after doctors gave special permission for them to have specific Smart Sugars placed in their feeding tubes. All other efforts had failed. There was no other medical hope. It is tragic that in some cases, every person with the same health challenge in those hospitals (before and after these isolated cases) died because the doctors did not want to break traditional protocol.

A few doctors today are integrating Glycoscience into traditional practice and discovering self-evident benefits. These patients have cause to rate their doctors with high scores of satisfaction. But, how many more like Terri Schiavo will be cast aside the road like rag dolls by the rest of us?

Source and References:

http://www.nytimes.com/2014/04/16/health/pet-scans-found-to-clarify-vegetative-state.html?partner=rss&emc=rss&_r=2

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