

Response Letter to Published Article: Ir Med J; May 2022; Vol 115; No. 5; P601

**“Recurrent Postcoital Transient Global Amnesia Associated with
Diffusion Restriction Within the Left Hippocampus by Donlon et al”**

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Dear Editor,

Whilst I understand the clinical interest generated by the case of recurrent transient global amnesia (TGA) associated with sexual activity reported by Donlon et al.,¹ and the authors’ desire to raise clinical awareness of this condition, the association of TGA with sexual activity has been known of since some of the earliest descriptions, dating from the 1960s.² There is now a substantial literature, comprising both individual case reports and epidemiological studies, confirming this association.³ Hence the national and international (UK, Spain) interest of online news media in the current case is somewhat baffling, and I fear may be generated more by titillation and prurience than a concern with neurological disease.

Whilst TGA events are usually solitary, there is a finite recurrence rate, as the authors note, but they do not mention any of the possible predisposing factors to TGA recurrence which have been postulated on the basis of previous studies, such as a personal or family history of migraine, a personal history of depression, or a family history of TGA.³ Such recurrent cases might give insights into the neurobiological mechanisms underlying TGA episodes which currently remain obscure, principally because of the difficulty of investigating patients in the earliest stages of the episode. Although the neuroimaging changes of punctate diffusion restriction in the hippocampus (most usually in CA1 hippocampal region) may be helpful for diagnosis in the appropriate clinical context (the changes are neither necessary nor sufficient), their increasing appearance up to 84 hours post event suggests they are downstream events in the pathophysiology of TGA.

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References:

1. Donlon E, Mohamed AS, McGettigan J, Kiely P, Boers P. Recurrent postcoital transient global amnesia associated with diffusion restriction within the left hippocampus. *Irish Med J.* 2022;115:601.
2. Fisher CM, Adams RD: Transient global amnesia. *Acta Neurol Scand.* 1964;40 (Suppl9):1-81.
3. Larner AJ. *Transient global amnesia. From patient encounter to clinical neuroscience* (2nd edition). London: Springer, 2022 (in press).