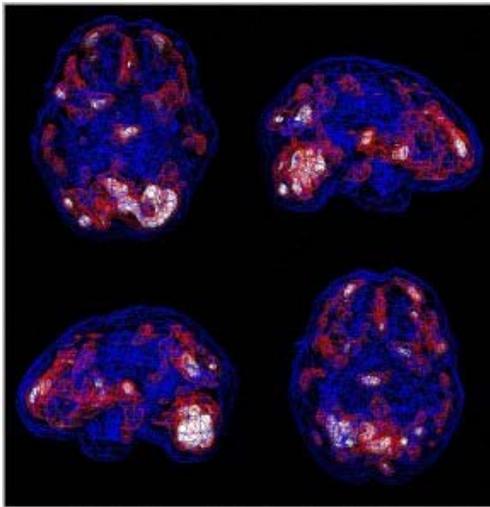


Case of the Week: Jeff—Bipolar Disorder and More

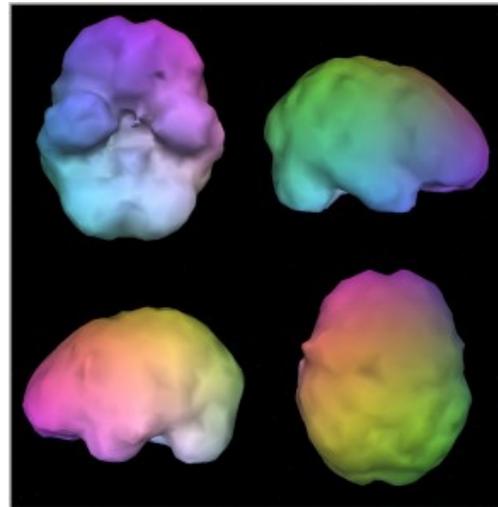


Dr. Amen's Blog

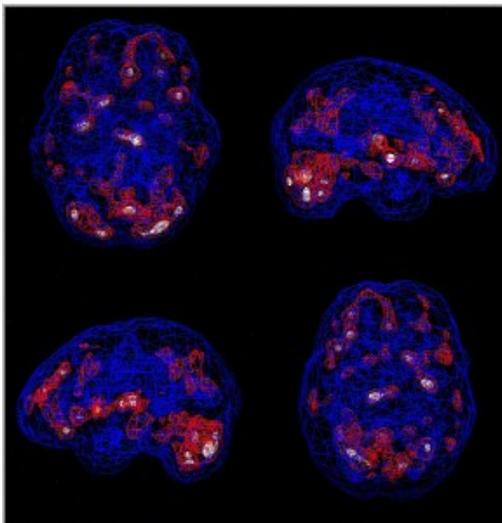
Tag Archives: Alpha-Stim 100 Case of the Week: Jeff—Bipolar Disorder and More



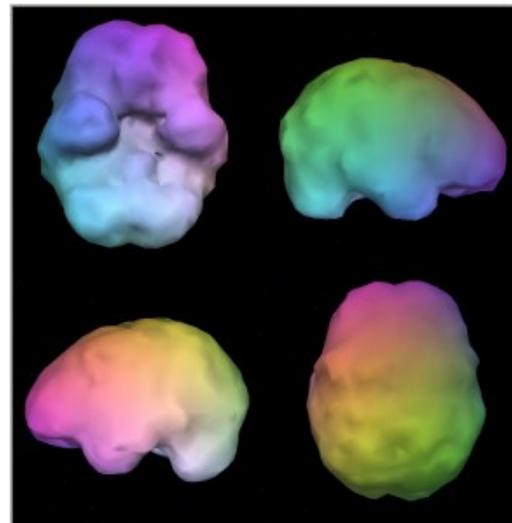
Jeff's brain—active view at rest



Jeff's brain—surface view at rest



Jeff's brain—active view with concentration



Jeff's brain—surface view with concentration

Brain scan comments: The outside surface of the scans look reasonably healthy. The active view shows excessive activity, especially in the limbic (emotional) and basal ganglia (anxiety centers). The scan also shows hyperfrontality (a big word to say the frontal lobes are dramatically overactive (so his gear shifter will tend to get stuck). There is also excessive activity in the temporal lobes. We need to calm and stabilize this brain in order for him to feel calmer and more stable.

Jeff was a 30-year-old man when he was first seen by Dr. Joseph Annibali at Amen Clinics in Reston, Virginia, in the summer of 2009. He wanted help for anxiety, depression, and ADD, which had crippled him for many years. Jeff also reported a short fuse, chronic irritability, and periods of rage when abusing drugs (which he took to self-medicate). He also had Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), due to the tragic death of a close family member.

Incredibly, prior to coming to Amen Clinics Jeff had tried more than 40 different psychiatric medications, with limited benefit. He had had several serious head traumas, ate an unhealthy diet, and had abused virtually every available street drug in the previous 10 years. Jeff hoped that by coming to Amen Clinics, SPECT brain imaging combined with a thorough re-evaluation could help him understand his problems and heal himself.

Jeff's brain SPECT imaging showed a number of interesting findings. The anterior cingulate system (the brain's "gear shifter") was overactive, contributing to his getting stuck on drugs of abuse. His limbic system (the deeper, emotional areas of the brain) was overactive, which suggests serious depression or a bipolar disorder. He had a "diamond pattern," on SPECT, which we see often in those with PTSD. Jeff's SPECT findings also showed evidence of physical trauma to his brain, not surprising given his reports of having had several serious head traumas.

Dr. Annibali's assessment was that Jeff's history of serious depressive periods and other periods of mood elevation, his pattern of self-medication, his family history, and his SPECT findings all supported a bipolar disorder diagnosis. Dr. Annibali recommended for Jeff medication to stabilize Jeff's mood cycles; fish oil and several nutritional supplements to heal and balance Jeff's brain; a food allergy elimination diet because of suspected food sensitivities; an Alpha-Stim 100, an electronic medical device to treat anxiety, depression, and pain; and a special type of psychotherapy called Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR), which is quite helpful for PTSD issues.

Jeff had a follow-up appointment with Dr. Annibali three months after his Amen Clinics evaluation. At follow-up, Jeff reported that by following Dr. Annibali's recommendations his anxiety melted away, his depression was markedly reduced, and his mood cycles were much less of a problem. He said his progress was "amazing," and that he was "extremely happy."

Nine months after his Amen Clinics evaluation, Jeff's mother called to tell us that she was incredibly happy with everything we had done for Jeff and his family. She told us that Jeff and his family had struggled for 12 years before coming to Amen Clinics. Before his Amen Clinics evaluation, Jeff used to sit on his bed all day, every day, doing nothing. Now Jeff works 40 hours each week.

It gives us immense satisfaction to help good people like Jeff and his family. Jeff's case illustrates that a thorough evaluation, combined with SPECT brain imaging, can lead to more accurate diagnoses and targeted treatment recommendations. Our treatment recommendations are likely to be more successful than what patients have tried in the past because we can see what the brain is doing and better understand what we need to do to balance and heal the brain.