

Can you speak to the prevalence of catatonia?

Dr. Beach:

One of the things that's been really challenging about catatonia is that it is really hard to get an assessment of how prevalent it is, what the incidence is, and how many cases are actually being seen and how many cases are being mixed.

There have been some studies that have attempted to get at that. There's one famous one that's often quoted that up to 10 percent of patients on an inpatient psychiatric unit might have features of catatonia, but we really don't have a great sense of the base rate.

I see a lot of cases—a lot more than most psychiatrists. Part of that is because I'm sometimes called in to see other people's cases. But a large part of that is because I have learned and been taught to recognize a wider spectrum of catatonia.

In our hospital, we do see upwards of 50 cases a year, which is significantly more than other hospitals might report. And I don't think that's a problem with overdiagnosis. I think it reflects the fact that a lot of catatonia is going underrecognized.