

What are your thoughts about the role of anxiety or fear or substance abuse in catatonia?

Dr. Cuevas:

I think substance abuse is one of the most frequent etiologies of catatonia in emergency rooms. It's very important to have in mind that when you have an intoxication or withdrawal, that is very important. And also anxiety, when we have intense anxiety, it's very frequent to have catatonic symptoms. Maybe not as severe as some other conditions, but it is also very frequent, especially in emergency rooms.

I think that probably we are not aware in emergency rooms to make this diagnosis. And we usually treat these conditions with antipsychotics before benzodiazepines. And I think this is a mistake — that we could do better.