

Anxiety Disorders - Causes, Symptoms and Treatment

Anxiety disorders are among the most common mental illnesses in the UK. They cover everything from panic disorder, phobias and obsessive compulsive disorder to post-traumatic stress disorder. Anxiety disorders can affect all aspects of a person's overall health. For example, patients with anxiety disorders are three times to five times more likely to visit a physician than those without anxiety disorders. They are also six times more likely to be hospitalized for psychiatric disorders. Five major types of anxiety disorders are: * Generalized Anxiety Disorder * Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD) * Panic Disorder * Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) * Social Phobia (or Social Anxiety Disorder)

Causes Everyone feels anxious at times. Challenges such as workplace pressures, public speaking, highly demanding schedules or writing an exam can lead to a sense of worry, even fear. A number of factors may increase the reported risk in women, including hormonal factors, cultural pressures to meet everyone else's needs except their own, and fewer self-restrictions on reporting anxiety to doctors. One study indicated that if such children could be identified as early as 2 years of age they possibly could be treated to avoid later anxiety disorders. Another brain structure called the hippocampus also helps process threatening signals and changes information into memories.

Symptoms Psychiatrists divide anxiety into three main types: general anxiety, phobias and panic disorder. If there's a particularly difficult situation at work or at home, the stress that this creates can spill over into other areas of life - and create anxiety. The patient is anxious or apprehensive and may show signs like sweating, palpitation, dry mouth, and dizziness, and nausea, loss of appetite, frequent urination, and difficulty in swallowing. There also seems to be a correlation between GAD and other psychiatric disorders, including depression, phobia disorder, and panic disorder. Anxiety is a risk factor for sleep disorders such as insomnia.

Treatment Before treatment begins, a doctor must conduct a careful diagnostic evaluation to determine whether a person's symptoms are caused by an anxiety disorder or a physical problem. Antidepressants were developed to treat depression but are also effective for anxiety disorders. Some people need treatment throughout their lives, while others may recover completely after a period of treatment with counseling and medications. Medications may be used alone or in combination with these techniques. Patients should not avoid anxiety-relieving medications for fear of becoming addicted. Their doctors will give them sufficient medication to alleviate the symptoms and decrease the amount of the drug as the symptoms diminish.

About the Author

This course explores variations on the proposition that an adequate recognition of beauty could, however indirectly, make you a more humane.

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