

Anxiety Disorders

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PREVALENCE

- Up to 8-12% of the population may experience a significant anxiety disorder, with social anxiety being the most common type
- Anxiety disorders are seen in children, adolescents, and adults

TYPES

- Social Anxiety
- Separation Anxiety
- Generalized Anxiety
- Panic Disorder
- Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD)
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

SOCIAL ANXIETY

- SYMPTOMS
 - Children and adolescents prefer not to raise their hand in class or speak in front of the class
 - Self conscious and concern about appearance (eg. how they may appear when speaking to others)
 - Avoidant behavior, seen especially in adults
 - Associated with alcohol use which may cause disinhibition
- TREATMENT
 - Relaxation exercises (eg. diaphragmatic breathing)
 - Cognitive behavioral strategies
 - Cognitive restructuring or challenging worries and negative thoughts
 - Gradual exposure to feared situations and the resulting desensitization
 - SSRIS such as Lexapro, Prozac, Zoloft, Celexa, or Paxil

SEPARATION ANXIETY

- SYMPTOMS
 - Intense fear upon separation from parent(s)
 - May result in school refusal
 - Manifests with worry about parent safety or health
 - Difficulty remaining in own bed at night
- TREATMENT
 - Gradual exposure and desensitization
 - Brief phone call home during school day at pre-arranged time
 - Two five-minute passes to visit parent(s) in their room during the night
 - May consider SSRI's

GENERALIZED ANXIETY

- SYMPTOMS
 - Excessive worry
 - Feeling tense and on edge
 - May have headaches and stomach upset
- TREATMENT
 - Relaxation exercises (eg. diaphragmatic breathing)
 - Cognitive behavioral strategies
 - Cognitive restructuring or challenging worries and thoughts
 - Gradual exposure to feared situations and the resulting desensitization
 - SSRIS such as Lexapro, Prozac, Zoloft, Celexa, or Paxil; non-addictive anti-anxiety medication such as Buspar

PANIC DISORDER

- SYMPTOMS
 - Initial
 - Sudden, out of the blue, intense episodes of anxiety
 - Heart palpitations
 - Shortness of breath
 - Feeling as though one is losing control and may die
 - After initial episode:
 - Anticipatory anxiety- wondering when the next attack will occur
 - Phobic avoidance
- TREATMENT
 - Relaxation exercises (eg. diaphragmatic breathing)
 - Cognitive behavioral strategies
 - Cognitive restructuring or challenging worries and thoughts
 - Gradual exposure to feared situations and the resulting desensitization
 - SSRIS such as Lexapro, Prozac, Zoloft, Celexa, or Paxil; Benzodiazepine-type medication such as Klonopin wafer or Xanax for short-term use

OCD

- SYMPTOMS
 - Checking or counting
 - Excessive hand washing
- TREATMENT
 - Relaxation exercises (eg. diaphragmatic breathing)
 - Cognitive behavioral strategies
 - Exposure with Response Prevention
 - SSRIS such as Lexapro, Prozac, Zoloft, Celexa, Paxil, or Luvox

PTSD

- SYMPTOMS
 - Occurs after one is exposed to a situation way beyond the usual human experience (eg. serious accidents or injuries)
- TREATMENT
 - Relaxation exercises (eg. diaphragmatic breathing)
 - Talk therapy to review the incident that occurred and allow the individual to gain mastery over their feelings associated with this incident
 - Cognitive behavioral strategies
 - Gradual exposure to trigger event and the resulting desensitization
 - SSRIS such as Lexapro, Prozac, Zoloft, Celexa, or Paxil

CO-MORBID CONDITIONS WITH ANXIETY

- Co-morbidity with anxiety is often depression
- Anxiety and depression can be targeted and treated together
- Depression includes depressed mood, decreased energy, interest and concentration, as well as increased/decreased appetite, increased/decreased sleep, periods of hopelessness, helplessness, and possibly thoughts of not wanting to live
- Cognitive behavioral strategies and antidepressant medications combined together usually offer the best treatment response