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RESEARCH ARTICLE

ANXIETY DISORDERS AND HOMOEOPATHIC APPROACH

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Abstract

Anxiety disorders are among the most common mental health conditions, affecting millions worldwide. Characterized by excessive worry, fear, and physiological symptoms such as palpitations, restlessness, and difficulty concentrating, anxiety disorders can significantly impact daily life and overall well-being. Conventional treatments often include psychotherapy and pharmacological interventions, but concerns about side effects and long-term dependency have led many individuals to explore more appropriate approaches, including homeopathy. This article focuses on various anxiety disorders in short and their homeopathic approach.

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Introduction:-

In everyday life almost everybody gets anxious or feels nervous before a test, or an important business meeting. Even rich or poor, famous or general public suffers from this anxiety may be in the terms of worries and fears. The term 'anxiety disorders' is a term that covers pathological fear and anxiety. The terms related to anxiety disorders became more prominent in psychiatry toward the end of the 19th century. One could argue that the concept of anxiety disorders, as a distinct classification, emerged during the time of Sigmund Freud. Freud and his followers viewed anxiety as a warning signal—an internal alarm triggered when socially unacceptable or unconscious id impulses threatened to surface into conscious awareness. He suggested that anxiety could serve an adaptive function, as the discomfort it creates can motivate individuals to develop new ways of coping with life's challenges.

❖ Prevalence-

Global Prevalence:

- According to the World Health Organization (WHO), around 4% of the global population suffers from an anxiety disorder.^[9]
- The Global Burden of Disease (GBD) study estimates that 301 million people had an anxiety disorder in 2019.
- Anxiety disorders are more common in women than in men, with a ratio of about 2:1.

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Prevalence by Region:

- United States: The National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) reports that about 19.1% of adults (or ~40 million people) experience an anxiety disorder in a given year.
- Europe: The European Study of the Epidemiology of Mental Disorders (ESEMeD) found that 14% of Europeans have an anxiety disorder.
- Asia & Africa: Lower prevalence rates are reported in some studies (~3–6%), though underdiagnosis and cultural differences may play a role^[9]

Age Group Differences:

- Adolescents: About 31.9% of U.S. adolescents aged 13–18 experience an anxiety disorder.
- Elderly Population: Anxiety is less frequently diagnosed in older adults but still affects around 10% of people over 60.

❖ Common Types of Anxiety Disorders & Prevalence:

- Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD): ~5–6% lifetime prevalence
- Social Anxiety Disorder (SAD): ~7% annual prevalence
- Panic Disorder: ~2–3% annual prevalence
- Specific Phobias: ~7–9% annual prevalence

❖ Common symptoms of Anxiety Disorder:

All types of anxiety disorders share one common trait: they interfere with an individual's ability to function in everyday life. They lead to:

- Disrupted daily routines
- A pessimistic outlook on life
- A constant sense of losing control over potential negative events

Anxiety manifests through both psychological and physical symptoms, which are often interrelated:

Psychological/Behavioral Symptoms ^[8]:

1. Nervousness
2. Vigilance (constant watchfulness)
3. Lack of concentration
4. Worry or apprehension
5. Restlessness
6. Irritability

Physical Symptoms:

1. Sleeplessness / Insomnia
2. Breathlessness
3. Feeling faint
4. Trembling
5. Sweating
6. Tiredness / Fatigue
7. Frequent urination
8. Palpitations (pounding heartbeat)
9. Muscle tension
10. Headaches
11. Hot flashes or chills
12. Hyperventilation
13. Nausea or stomach cramps

Anxiety and Performance:

The relationship between anxiety level and performance efficiency is often explained by the Yerkes–Dodson Law.
Low anxiety → Low motivation and performance
Optimal level of anxiety → Best performance (alertness without overwhelm)
High anxiety → Poor coping ability and performance breakdown

❖ Homoeopathic approach:

Dr.Samuel Hahnemann in his Organon of Medicine (6th edition, § 210–230) discussed the classification of mental diseases and described them under four types. Here's a clearer explanation of each type:

1. Somato-psychic type (Aphorism 216, Organon of Medicine 6th edition):

These are mental diseases that originate from physical diseases. The disorder begins in the body (soma), and later the mental symptoms (psyche) become prominent.

Example: A long-standing physical ailment such as chronic indigestion, liver disorder, or suppressed eruptions may gradually lead to irritability, sadness, or other mental disturbances.

2. Mental disease due to an exciting cause (Aphorism 221, Organon of Medicine 6th edition):

These are acute mental diseases produced by some sudden emotional shock or exciting factor. Causes may be grief, fright, anger, abuse, disappointed love, etc. If the exciting cause is recent and strong, a suitable acute remedy may cure it rapidly.

3. Mental disease of doubtful origin (Aphorism 224, Organon of Medicine 6th edition):

In such cases, it is uncertain whether the disease started as a physical one that later affected the mind, or whether it began directly in the mind. The origin is obscure, and the physician needs careful observation to classify and treat.

4. Psycho-somatic type (Aphorism 225, Organon of Medicine 6th edition)

These are mental diseases that arise primarily in the psyche (mind) and later affect the soma (body). Mental disturbance comes first, and then physical ailments appear.

Example: Prolonged anxiety or grief leading to digestive troubles, sleep disorders, or even chronic physical illness.

❖ Hahnemann's Approach to Mental Diseases:

During Hahnemann's era, mental diseases were generally regarded as a curse, with patients thought to be possessed by evil spirits. As a result, harsh and oppressive methods were often used in asylums. Hahnemann revolutionized this outlook by introducing human methods of management. His remarkable insight anticipated modern psychotherapy and emphasized a combination of psychological care and homeopathic treatment, depending on the origin of the disease and theory of "SIMILIA SIMILIBUS CURENTOR". Anxiety disorders considered to be mental disease and approach of treatment is like all mental disorders explained by Dr. Hahnemann in 6th edition of Organon of Medicine.^[5]

A) Mental diseases resulting from bodily diseases, later transformed into one-sided diseases:

Combination of anti-psoric drug treatment and psychotherapy. Lifestyle regulation and proper psychical behavior from the physician and attendants. Examples of management: Raving madness should be met with calm fearlessness and firm resolution. Loquacity should be listened to in silence, giving some degree of attention. Reference: Aphorism 228 Organon of Medicine 6th edition

B) Mental diseases of psychogenic origin:

Psychotherapy is the mainstay. The physician should not only prescribe medicines but act as a friend, philosopher, and guide, helping the patient resolve complexes and return to healthy personal growth and development.

C) Mental diseases as acute expressions of latent psora

These are usually acute mental explosions of an underlying psoric miasm. Managed just like acute diseases with superficial/acute remedies, not with deep-acting constitutional anti-psorics. Goal: to subdue the acute flare so psora returns to its latent state. Once acute symptoms are managed, anti-psoric therapy should be instituted to prevent relapse. Reference: Aphorism 221–223 Organon of Medicine 6th edition

Homoeopathic remedies for Anxiety disorders:

1. **Aconitum napellus**- Results of vexation combined with anxiety and fright. Great nervous excitement and feverish restlessness. Mental instability, delirium mostly at night. Anxious impatience. Inconsolable anxiety and piteous wailing. Very easily frightened. Fear of ghost. Lamenting with fear of impending death and doubt of salvation. Fixed premonition of death she foretells the day or hour^[1]
2. **Arsenicum album** –Great anguish and restlessness. Changes place continually. Fear of death, of being left alone. Great fear with cold sweat. Thinks it useless to take medicine^[1]
3. **Argentum nitricum**- Fearful and nervous. Thinks his understanding will and must fail. Impulse to jump out of window. Apprehension of serious diseases. Time passes slowly. Fear and anxieties and hidden irrational motives for action^[1] Dreads of ordeals. Fear of impending evil, of crowds, passing a certain point, of high buildings, of dark^[4]

4. **Calcarea carbonica**- Apprehensive worse towards evening. Fears loss of reason, misfortune, and contagious diseases. Anxiety with palpitation^[1]. Fear excited by reports of cruelties. Child is afraid of everything it sees.^[4]
5. **Ignatia amara**- Fear of thieves, of trifles, of things coming near him. Alert, oversensitive and nervous.^[4]
6. **Lycopodium clavatum**- Melancholy, afraid to be alone. Little things annoy. Extremely sensitive. Averse to undertake new things. Loss of self-confidence. Constant fear of breaking down under stress. Cannot bear to see anything new⁽¹⁾. Afraid to be alone, of men, of his own shadow. Dread of presence of new persons, of everything, even ringing of doorbell. Loss of self-confidence from anticipation, averse to take new things, yet when he undertakes it he goes through ease and comfort^[4]
7. **Phosphorus**- Great lowness of spirits. Fearfulness as if something were creeping out of every corner. Dread of death when alone^[1] Anxious about future, of thunderstorm, of ghosts, about future^[4]

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