

## **Anxiety Disorder**

### Agoraphobia

Fear of some situation / place where escape seems difficult, embarrassing, and perceive help as unavailable if experience anxiety symptoms. Individuals will avoid their feared place / situation, such as crowded supermarkets. But if the individuals confront their fear, they suffer intense anxiety or requiring a companion. Agoraphobia can develop in the wake of a series of panic attacks.

### Panic Attack

A person feels a sense of disaster that is usually accompanied by cardiac symptoms and trouble breathing. It usually starts abruptly and rapidly builds a peak and the entire episode lasts for more than half an hour. Panic attacks are common and often easily treated.

*Signs & Symptoms:- (several of the following)*

- Chest Pain / Discomfort
- Chills / Hot flashes
- Choking sensation
- Feeling unreal / detached from self
- Dizzy, lightheaded, fainting spells
- Fear of dying
- Fear of losing control / becoming insane
- Heart racing / pounding or skipping beats
- Nausea / Abdominal discomfort
- Numbness / Tingling
- Sweating
- Shortness of breath
- Trembling

### Panic Disorder

A common anxiety disorder in which the person experiences panic attack and worries about another attack. It typically begins when the person is young. Sufferer usually stays at home to prevent further attacks.

*Signs & Symptoms:- (several of the following)*

- Ongoing concern that there will be more attacks
- Worry of the consequences of having the attack
- Change in behaviour, such as doing something to avoid or combat attacks

### Social Phobia

Usually happens in the mid teens. Individuals with social phobia have fear that they may appear clumsy, silly, or shameful and that others will notice.

*Signs & Symptoms:- (several of the following)*

- Physical symptoms, such as blushing, hoarseness, tremors, perspiration
  - The stimulus almost always causes anxiety, which may be a cued / situationally predisposed panic attack
  - The person is able to realize that such fear is unreasonable or out of proportion
  - The person either avoids situation or endures it with severe distress or anxiety
  - The person either has a marked distress on having the phobia or there is a marked interfere with the person's usual routine, social, job or personal functioning
- => Sufferers who are under 18 year old must have symptoms for 6 months or more.

### Specific Phobia

Previously known as simple phobia. Specific phobia is unwarranted fear of specific objects / situations, such as animals, blood, heights, travel by airplane, being closed in, and thunderstorm. A person with specific phobia may also be worrying about what they might do when faced with his/her feared object/situation, if he/she were to confront the fear.

*Signs & Symptoms:- (several of the following)*

- A strong, persistent fear that is excessive or unreasonable.
- A stimulus almost always immediately provokes an anxiety response
- The person is able to realize that such fear is unreasonable or out of proportion
- The person either avoids situation or endures it with severe distress or anxiety
- The person either has a marked distress on having the phobia or there is a marked interfere with the person's usual routine, social, job or personal functioning

=> Onset is usually in late teens or early 20s.

### Acute Stress Disorder

A person who suffers from acute stress disorder will repeatedly re-experience of a traumatic event in some way, such as flashbacks, images, thoughts, dreams, after the event and lasts for a month or less. The stress is severe enough to provoke fear, horror, and helplessness.

*Signs & Symptoms:- (several of the following)*

- Besides the above mentioned, sufferers also feel detached or numbness
- Diminished awareness of surroundings
- Feeling that it's not real
- Feeling one is not him/herself
- Mental distress
- Sufferers will strongly avoid activities, conversation, feelings, people, places, or thoughts that are reminiscent of the trauma
- Marked symptoms of anxiety and hyper arousal, such as insomnia, irritability, poor concentration, restlessness, increased startle response
- Interfered social, job, or personal functioning

### Posttraumatic Stress Disorder

Sufferers repeatedly relive severely traumatic event, such as combat a natural disaster (flood) or man-made disasters (rape, abduction). Sufferers usually feel guilty or shoulder personal responsibility. Symptoms lasted for more than one month.

*Signs & Symptoms:- (several of the following)*

- Relives event in ways, such as repeated distressing dreams, intrusive distressing collection thoughts, images, flashbacks, hallucination, illusion.
- Marked mental stress
- Physiological reaction in response to cues
- Avoidance of feelings, thoughts, conversation concerning the event
- Avoidance of people, places, activities that recall the event
- Failed to recall an important feature of the event
- Loss of interest or participation in activities once enjoyed
- Feelings of detachment or isolation from people
- Feel life will be brief and unfulfilled
- Experience restriction in ability to love or feel other strong emotion
- Insomnia
- Angry outbursts / irritability
- Poor concentration
- Excessive vigilance
- Increased startle response
- Distress / Impair work, social, or personal functioning.

### Generalized Anxiety Disorder

Sufferers feel tense or anxious much of the time although experience no episode of acute panic. They typically worry far more about many things than objective facts can justify. The degree of impairment is usually not severe.

*Signs & Symptoms:- (for more than half the days for at least 6 months having several of the following)*

- Feelings of being restless, edgy, keyed up
- Tiring easily
- Trouble concentrating
- Irritability
- Increased muscle tension
- Trouble sleeping
- Distress / Impair work, social, or personal functioning

### Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder

Sufferers are bothered by repeated thoughts or behaviour that appear senseless, even to them. Obsessions are recurrent thoughts, beliefs, or ideas that dominate sufferers' thought content. Compulsions are acts performed repeatedly in a way that the sufferers realize are neither appropriate nor useful. The most common is fear of contamination that leads to excessive hand washing.

*Signs & Symptoms:-*

- Obsession – recurring, persisting thoughts, impulses, or images that caused marked distress or anxiety
- Compulsion – the need to repeat physical behaviour. The behaviour is to reduce or eliminate distress or prevent something that is dreaded.
- During some part of the illness, sufferers recognize that the obsessions or compulsions are unreasonable or excessive
- The obsession and/or compulsion cause severe distress, time consuming, and interfere one's routine or social, work, or personal functioning.

=> Begins in adolescent or early adult life.

*Reference:-*

Morrison, J. (2001). DSM-IV Made Easy: The Clinician's Guide to Diagnosis. New York: The Guilford Press

*For more detailed description and criteria of each mental illness, pls refer to the book mentioned above or <http://www.psychologynet.com>*