



Psychological and Physical Assessment Methods in Anxiety Diagnosis

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INTRODUCTION

Anxiety is a natural response to stress or perceived danger, often referred to as the “fight or flight” response. This mechanism evolved to help humans survive threatening situations. However, for some individuals, this heightened state of alertness becomes chronic and disproportionate to the actual threat, leading to a range of anxiety disorders. Anxiety disorders are among the most common mental health conditions worldwide, affecting millions of people every year. In this article, we will explore the various aspects of anxiety diagnosis, the tools used to assess anxiety disorders, the types of anxiety disorders, and the importance of early identification and treatment. Anxiety, in its simplest form, is a feeling of unease, such as worry or fear, which can range from mild to severe. While everyone experiences anxiety from time to time, it becomes problematic when the feelings are persistent, excessive, and interfere with day-to-day functioning. Anxiety disorders are characterized by excessive fear, worry, and apprehension about situations that are often not dangerous or threatening. Some of the common physical and emotional symptoms of anxiety include increased heart rate, sweating, trembling, difficulty breathing, and feelings of dread [1,2]. In its most severe form, anxiety disorders can lead to panic attacks, where individuals experience overwhelming fear, often with no apparent trigger.

DESCRIPTION

Before diving into the diagnosis, it’s important to understand the different types of anxiety disorders. Each of these disorders manifests with unique symptoms, although they share common features, such as excessive fear or worry. Generalized anxiety disorder is characterized by chronic, excessive worry about various aspects of life, including work, health, and social interactions. People with GAD often find it difficult to control their worry, which can significantly impact

their daily life. Common symptoms include restlessness, fatigue, difficulty concentrating, irritability, muscle tension, and sleep disturbances. Panic disorder involves recurrent and unexpected panic attacks. These attacks are sudden episodes of intense fear or discomfort, accompanied by symptoms such as heart palpitations, chest pain, shortness of breath, dizziness, and a sense of impending doom. People with panic disorder may develop a fear of experiencing another attack, leading to avoidance behaviours and a restricted lifestyle. Social anxiety disorder, also known as social phobia, involves an overwhelming fear of being judged or humiliated in social situations [3,4]. Individuals with SAD often experience intense anxiety in situations where they are the focus of attention, such as public speaking, meeting new people, or attending social events.

CONCLUSION

Symptoms include rapid heart rate, blushing, sweating, trembling, and a strong desire to avoid social interactions. Specific phobias are intense fears of specific objects or situations, such as heights, spiders, flying, or injections. These phobias cause individuals to go to great lengths to avoid encountering their feared object or situation. The fear experienced is out of proportion to the actual danger and can significantly disrupt daily functioning. Obsessive-compulsive disorder involves recurrent, intrusive thoughts (obsessions) and repetitive behaviours or mental acts (compulsions) that individuals feel compelled to perform in response to those thoughts. The compulsive behaviours are often aimed at reducing anxiety, but they offer only temporary relief. OCD can interfere with daily life and cause significant distress.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author's declared that they have no conflict of interest.

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