

# What is Anxiety and how it will Affect Your Daily Life?

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## Abstract

Feelings of worry, fear, and panic are common in our daily lives. They usually come as a normal response to some of the situations we found ourselves in. An anxiety disorder develops when these feelings blow out of proportion and refuse to go away. The resulting forms of anxiety disorders include generalized anxiety disorder, panic disorder, and social anxiety disorder. A person experiencing any form of anxiety disorder exhibits symptoms like fear, dizziness, and overthinking. If left untreated, these symptoms interfere with your daily life in many ways, including affecting your mental health. Anxiety treatment involves psychotherapy, medication, and other self-help measures.

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## Introduction

### Anxiety, its effect on your life and possible treatment

The burden of mental disorders has continued to grow despite all the preventative measures put forth. This has led to quite a significant impact on many people's health and their social lives. According to a report released by our world in data in 2018, more than 0.7 billion people worldwide suffer from mental health-related problems. And in all these, anxiety is the most common mental illness, affecting close to 0.3 billion people globally.

## Literature Review

### Anxiety and how it affects your life

Anxiety is a pervasive mental health disorder that leads one into a feeling of fear and tension. The condition is also known to cause panic attacks and other physical symptoms such as chest pain, fast heartbeat, and racing thoughts. While it's estimated that we all experience anxiety-related conditions from time to time, persistent anxiety attacks can affect the quality of your daily life if left unattended [1].

Anxiety often occurs as a triggered condition from your brain. The condition comes about due to your brain's response to a threat by releasing stress hormones like adrenaline. These stress hormones trigger the physical symptoms of anxiety.

During an anxiety attack, you will experience an increased breathing and heart rate that is all aimed at concentrating blood flow to your brain. This in itself is your body's first response to the attack just in case it turns into an extreme situation. Anxiety disorders attack us in different ways, explaining the reason for different anxiety treatments. Some of the common forms of anxiety disorders include

**Generalized anxiety disorder (GAD):** This anxiety disorder is known to cause excessive worries and panic over different things with no rational reason behind it. When you have Generalized Anxiety Disorder, you are usually in anticipation of disaster and are overly anxious about many things. While it is challenging to control your worries when affected by this form of anxiety, mild cases don't significantly impact your daily life activities.

The Anxiety and Depression Association of America report points out that generalized anxiety disorder affects more than 3.1% of the U.S. population annually. Women are the most affected, twice as much as their male counterparts. With proper anxiety treatment, you can still function normally and be socially active while suffering from generalized anxiety disorder [2].

**Obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD):** Obsessive-compulsive disorder is a form of anxiety where you will continually feel the urge to perform particular things time and again. This disorder also leads you into experiencing intrusive thoughts, often referred to as obsessions.

The typical manifestations of OCD are usually through compulsions

like the desire to do something quite strange. Obsessions such as aggressive impulses and the need for perfection are equally familiar with Obsessive-Compulsive disorder.

**The social anxiety disorder:** Sometimes you may be overwhelmed by the paralyzing fear of social conditions and being chastened by other people. While some may consider it a phase in life, such symptoms are often associated with social anxiety disorder. Surprisingly, this type of anxiety starts affecting people as young as ten years.

Currently, many people in the world are unknowingly suffering from this anxiety disorder. The feeling of shame and profound phobia that characterize SAD is even more prevalent in mature adults above fifty years, with men being the most affected. Despite the availability of different anxiety treatments, ADAA reports that less than 5% of social anxiety disorder victims seek treatment upon the initial onset of this anxiety condition [3].

**Phobia and panic disorders:** Phobia and panic disorders are prevalent in people of all ages. Phobia lets you experience the fear of tight spaces, fear of heights, and other forms of fear. An anxiety disorder arises when you develop an uncontrollable urge to avoid all the feared situations.

Besides phobia, anxiety also develops when you experience panic attacks. Panic disorders related to anxiety may occur at any time, characterized by an overwhelming impulsive feeling. However, you need to note that other types of anxiety can also attack you when you experience a panic disorder.

Other forms of mild anxiety disorders include;

- Separation anxiety- Usually experienced in children when loved ones depart. This anxiety disorder may also affect adults facing the prospect of separation from the people they love.
- Medication-induced anxiety disorder- This usually arises from prolonged use of medications or illegal drugs. In other cases, it may happen as a withdrawal symptom from certain types of drugs.

## Discussion

### What triggers anxiety

Like any other mental illness, anxiety disorders don't arise from personal weaknesses or character flaws. A mix of other things may also lead to one experiencing a given type of anxiety disorder [4]. Below are some of the known leading causes of anxiety disorders.

- **Medications:** Medications are among the leading triggers of anxiety disorders in most people. Specific medical prescriptions that are obtained over the counter have ingredients that make one feel nervous. Usually, these feelings trigger a sequence of events in your mind and body that may culminate in either physical or mental anxiety symptoms. For instance, medications such as birth control pills are commonly associated with triggering anxiety in women.
- **Negative thoughts:** Negative thoughts not only trigger an anxiety disorder but are also harmful to your overall mental

health. For instance, deep thoughts of frustration and despair can trigger severe symptoms of anxiety. Similarly, if you tend to be too pessimistic when thinking about yourself, you may invite feelings of restlessness which is a known symptom of anxiety.

- **Stress and brain chemistry:** Any stressful experience in your life can alter the brain structure to react differently. This causes a disruption that in turn vigorously triggers a series of mood disorders and anxiety symptoms. Besides, stress-related behaviors such as alcoholism and insomnia can also trigger or worsen anxiety.

Other daily stressors in life also cause anxiety. However, experts warn that prolonged stress can lead to long-term anxiety and other mental health problems.

- **Personal triggers:** Personal triggers to anxiety are difficult to point out. However, you can use the help of a mental health expert to help you pinpoint them. Even so, events that remind you of bad things and other memories can be classified as personal triggers to anxiety. These may include a particular song, speech from someone, or even a place.
- **Genetics:** Though not a common anxiety trigger, your genetic makeup may also be the reason why you experience anxiety disorders time and again. If you have a family member with an anxiety disorder, there's a higher likelihood of you experiencing the same at a particular stage in your life.
- **Environmental factors:** Currently, environmental disorders are ranked high among the leading causes of anxiety in most people. Factors such as work-related stress, pressure from personal relationships, and a financial situation can contribute to anxiety disorders.
- **Caffeine and other substance abuse:** While there's no harm in relying on a cup of coffee in the early morning, it might be triggering or worsening your anxiety disorder. There is a considerable belief that people with panic disorders and social anxiety disorders have a higher sensitivity to some of the anxiety-inducing effects found in caffeine

### Signs and symptoms of anxiety disorders

We all experience anxiety differently, but some signs and symptoms of anxiety are pretty common in all of us. These are classified into mental and physical symptoms.

**Mental symptoms:** When suffering from anxiety disorders, some of the mental symptoms you will experience are;

- Racing thoughts and a feeling of dissociation
- Uncontrollable worries and over-thinking
- Restlessness and difficult concentration
- A feeling of fear and impending doom
- Irritability and tingling effects
- Fast heartbeat and heightened alertness,
- Problems with sleep and decline in appetite

**Physical symptoms**

- Sweating
- Hot flushes
- Hair loss
- Lack of energy
- Dizziness

The above signs and symptoms of anxiety can lead to depression if you don't seek early medical assistance.

### Effects of anxiety in your daily life

While anxiety disorders are now common in modern times, they have varying degrees of effects on your daily life. If not treated, anxiety disorders negatively change your life in many ways, such as;

**It affects your mental health:** Your mental health is always at stake whenever you experience anxiety. This is because you are under long-lasting stress, panic, and unnecessary fear. Your quality of thinking and decision-making may be significantly affected, resulting in various forms of mental problems.

**Affects your quality of life:** Any mental illness will always take a toll on your quality of life. Anxiety disorders also do the same as they essentially let you live in fear, dread, and uncontrollable worry. This limits you in many ways, such as the inability to take risks in your personal life.

Anxiety can also negatively impact your self-esteem. Whether you experience panic disorder or a generalized anxiety disorder, leaving a life full of worries and self-doubt can negatively affect your personality and self-worth.

**Problems with digestion:** Digestion problems are also a common effect of anxiety in many people. This manifests through nausea and stomach cramps. To a greater extent, anxiety disorders may worsen irritable bowel syndrome. Chronic anxiety disorders also impair your immune system, increasing the risk of developing ulcers.

**Neurological problems:** When you suffer from anxiety, your body activates the sympathetic nervous system. This is a form of retaliation to the perceived threats, which in essence prompts the sympathetic nervous system to work tirelessly. While this is a temporary reaction meant to offer relief, the overworking SNS becomes underactive after a given time.

The underactive and weak SNS means you don't have enough immunity against illness. Furthermore, it also makes you prone to muscle tension, leading to headaches, joint pain, and other neurological problems.

### Anxiety treatment

Just like any other mental health condition, anxiety disorders also require immediate treatment. The good news is that there is always treatment that will work for you regardless of the anxiety disorder in question. In most cases, most forms of anxiety treatment combine medication and psychotherapy [5-7]. Let us take a look at a few ways in which you can treat an anxiety disorder.

**Taking anti-anxiety medications:** Many medications decrease common anxiety symptoms such as panic and worry. For instance, benzodiazepine medications work quickly in relieving you of these symptoms. However, your body needs a high level of tolerance to make them more effective over time. You can also seek medical help such as short-term anti-anxiety prescriptions before progressing to the long-term ones.

**Use of antidepressants:** Cognitive Behavioral Therapy is a form of psychotherapy that can help lessen your anxiety disorders by controlling troubling symptoms. This type of therapy allows you to learn different ways of behaving and reacting to anxiety-inducing situations.

**Beta-blockers:** Beta-Blockers are better known for treating high blood pressure. However, they can also help treat and alleviate the physical symptoms of anxiety, such as trembling and blushing. Beta-blockers are also helpful in treating acute anxiety and are a preventive medication for most predictable forms of performance anxiety [7].

### Conclusion

Anxiety disorders are challenging to avoid in the modern-day setting. The disorder itself is a natural emotion essential for survival when you find yourself in an unnatural environment. Even so, when the feeling becomes too much overwhelming, it may be a sign you need professional anxiety treatment.

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