

# Anxiety disorders

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# Anxiety

- reaction on expected danger coming from inner or outer reality
- fear, stress
- spontaneous, situational, anticipatory
- symptoms

# Intro

- Anxiety disorders
  - *common*
  - with considerable *morbidity* and *social cost*
  - accompanied by *anxiety, worry, distress*

# Anxiety disorders

- 1. Panic disorders w/wo agoraphobia
- 2. Social phobia
- 3. Generalized anxiety disorder
- 4. Obsessive - compulsive disorder
- 5. Posttraumatic stress disorder and acute stress disorder

# 1. Panic disorders and agoraphobia

- recurrent unexpected panic attacks
  - discrete periods of intense fear
    - developed abruptly, peak within 10 minutes
    - may be associated with certain situations

# Criteria for panic attack I

- Anxiety symptoms
  - 1. palpitation, pounding heart, or accelerated heart rate
  - 2. sweating
  - 3. trembling or shaking
  - 4. sensations of shortness of breath or smothering
  - 5. feeling of choking
  - 6. chest pain or discomfort

# Criteria for panic attack II

- Anxiety symptoms (cont.)
  - 7. nausea or abdominal distress
  - 8. feeling dizzy, unsteady, light-headed, or faint
  - 9. derealization /feeling of unreality/, depersonalization /being detached from oneself/
  - 10. fear of losing control or going crazy
  - 11. fear of dying
  - 12. parestesias
  - 13. chills or hot flushes

# 1a/ Panic disorder without agoraphobia

- A.
  - recurrent unexpected panic attack
  - at least one of the attacks per month
- B.
  - absence of agoraphobia



# 1b/ Panic disorder with agoraphobia

- Criteria for agoraphobia
  - A. Anxiety about being in places or situations from which escape might be difficult.
  - B. The situations are avoided with marked distress or anxiety about having a P.A.

# 1c/ Agoraphobia without history of panic disorder

- A. The presence of agoraphobia related to fear of developing panic like symptoms/dizziness or diarrhea/.
- B. Criteria have never been met for panic disorder.

# Treatment

- Pharmacological
  - SSRIs
  - RIMA
  - Benzodiazepines – only in emergency
- Psychoterapeutic
  - Cognitive-behavioral treatment /relaxation, respiratory control, exposure therapy/

## 2. Social phobia

- Fear of one or more social or performance situations in which the person is exposed to unfamiliar people that will be embarrassing.

# Diagnostic criteria

- Fear
  - marked and persistent
  - provoked by phobic stimulus
  - recognised as unreasonable
- Phobic situation
  - avoided by anxiety, distress
  - interferes with the persons routine, occupational, social etc. activities
- Duration - at least 6 months in individuals under age 18

# Treatment

- Pharmacotherapy /RIMA, SSRIs, benzodiazepines only in emergency/
- Psychosocial /CBT/
  - exposure therapy

# Specific phobia

- Arachnophobia
- Acrophobia
- Claustrophobia
- Carcinophobia
- Thanatophobia
- Aquaphobia
- Aerophobia
- Hemophobia
- Nosophobia
- ...



### 3. Generalized anxiety disorder

# GAD

- Excessive anxiety or worry lasting for 6 months or longer, accompanied by at least three somatic symptoms.

# GAD - diagnostic criteria I

- A. Excessive anxiety and worry
- B. Difficult to control it
- C. Association with at least three symptoms
  - muscle tension
  - feeling on edge
  - being easily fatigued
  - difficulty concentrating
  - irritability
  - sleep disturbance

# Treatment

- Pharmacotherapy
  - Antidepressants SSRIs, BZD, beta-blockers
- Psychotherapy
  - dynamic, supportive, CBT

## 4. Obsessive-compulsive disorder

# OCD

- Patient have either obsession and compulsion that are a significant source of distress
  - are time - consuming
  - interfere significantly with the person's normal routine, occupational functioning or social activities or relationships.

# Obsessions

- 1. Recurrent and persistent thoughts, impulses, or images.
- 2. Not simply excessive worries about real-life problems.
- 3. Attempt to ignore or suppress them with some other thought or action.
- 4. Product of one's mind.

# Compulsion

- 1. Repetitive behaviors in response to an obsession which must be rigidly applied.
- 2. Behaviors or mental act preventing or reducing distress.
  - /handwashing, ordering, checking/



# Treatment

- Psychotherapy, behavior therapy
- Pharmacotherapy
  - SSRIs, Li, AP
- ECT
- Psychosurgery

# 5. Posttraumatic stress disorder

# A. PTSD - diagnostic criteria I

- A. Exposition to a traumatic event /death, injury/ with the experience of intense fear, helplessness, horror.
- B. The traumatic event is persistently reexperienced /images, ilusions, flashbacks, dreams.../

# PTSD - diagnostic criteria II

- C. Three or more of the stimuli associated with the trauma
  - thoughts, feelings, conversations
  - activities, places, people
  - inability to recall important aspects of the trauma
  - markedly diminished interest in significant activities
  - feeling of detachment from others
  - restricted range of affects /loving feels etc./
  - sense of foreshortened future /doesn't expect to have a career, marriage, children.../

# PTSD - diagnostic criteria III

- D. Two or more of persistent symptoms
  - difficulty falling or staying asleep
  - irritability or outburst of anger
  - difficulty concentrating
  - hypervigilance
  - exaggerated startle response

# PTSD - diagnostic criteria IV

- E. Duration more than one month
- F. The disturbance causes clinically significant distress in social, occupational or other important areas.

# Treatment

- Pharmacotherapy
  - Antidepressants SSRIs, mood stabilizers, anxiolytics, anticonvulsants
- Psychotherapy
  - individual, group, relaxation training

# References:

- **Waldinger RJ.: Psychiatry for medical students, Washington, DC : American Psychaitric Press, 1997**
- **Kaplan HI, Sadock BJ, Grebb JA.: Kaplan and Sadock's synopsis of psychiatry, Baltimore: Williams and Wilkins, 1997**