



## Homoeopathic Perspectives in the Management of Anxiety Disorders

By

Dr.Rinku Bishwas<sup>1\*</sup>, Dr.Gulab Chandra Gautam<sup>2</sup>, Dr.Suresh kumar<sup>3</sup>, Dr.Renu Yadav<sup>4</sup>, Dr.Chandra mani Singh<sup>5</sup>  
Dr Sumit Sharma<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1\*</sup>B.H.M.S., M.D.(Hom), ,Ph.D(Hom.) (Sc.),H.O.D. and Professor-Department of Pathology & Microbiology, State Lalbahadur shastri Homoeopathic Medical College and Hospital, Shantipuram, Prayagraj,Uttar Pradesh

<sup>2</sup>B.H.M.S., M.D.(Hom),Assistant Professor – Dept. of Surgery -State Lalbahadur Shastri Homoeopathic Medical College & Hospital, Shantipuram ,Prayagraj,Uttar Pradesh

<sup>3</sup>B.H.M.S., M.D.(Hom),Assistant Professor– Dept. of Forensic Medicine and Toxicology-State Lalbahadur Shastri Homoeopathic Medical College & Hospital, Shantipuram ,Prayagraj,Uttar Pradesh

<sup>4</sup>B.H.M.S., M.D.(Hom),Assistant professor- Department of Homoeopathic Materia Medica-Maharshi Menhi Homoeopathic medical college and hospital, katihar-Bihar

<sup>5</sup>B.H.M.S.,M.D.(Hom.),Assistant Professor- Department of Practice of Medicine-State Lalbahadur shastri Homoeopathic Medical College and Hospital, Shantipuram, Prayagraj,Uttar Pradesh

<sup>6</sup>B.H.M.S., M.D.(Hom),Professor & H.O.D.– Dept. of Community Medicine-State Lalbahadur Shastri Homoeopathic Medical College & Hospital, Shantipuram ,Prayagraj,Uttar Pradesh



### Abstract

*Anxiety disorders are very common nowadays. Symptoms can be mild or severe that cause great personal distress, and which impair social and occupational function. Core features include excessive fear and anxiety or avoidance of perceived threats that are persistent and impairing. Anxiety disorders involve dysfunction in brain circuits that respond to danger. The need for treatment is determined by the severity and persistence of symptoms, the level of associated disability and impact on everyday life, the presence of co-existing depressive symptoms, and other features such as a good response to or poor tolerability of previous treatment approaches.*

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### Introduction

Anxiety is a normal reaction to stress. Mild levels of anxiety can be agreeable in some situations. This alert us to risk or any danger and aware us to prepare and be conscientious .

Anxiety disorders are serious mental disorders that causes remarkable anxiety, worry or fright that doesn't goes away and makes it difficult to get through your day. Anxiety disorders are a cluster or group of mental illnesses characterised by repeated episodes of unexpected feelings of

intense anxiety and fear or terror that reach a peak within minutes.

People with anxiety disorders usually have recurring thoughts or concerns. They may also have physical symptoms such as dizziness, sweating, trembling, or palpitations.

Anxiety is considered a future-oriented, long-acting response broadly focused on a diffuse threat, whereas fear is an appropriate, present-oriented, and short-lived response to a clearly identifiable and specific threat.



It is when a person experiences chronic and excessive distress or worry regarding everyday life situations, above a normal protective anxiety threshold, that it can be problematic. A person struggling with an anxiety disorder may experience a range of symptoms including shortness of breath, difficulty sleeping, avoidance, use of illicit substances, worry, thoughts of not being able to cope.

## Epidemiology

Disease epidemiology is critical for understanding population trends, such as whether or not anxiety is increasing, covariates associated with changing trends, and factors involved in the control and management of anxiety disorders. Globally, the considerable variability in prevalence figures could represent a different distribution of risk factors for these disorders. Nevertheless, methodological and cultural factors and the evolution of diagnostic criteria over time probably play an important role.

Anxiety disorders are biopsychosocial conditions associated with generalized or situation-specific responses to perceived threats. The prevalence of anxiety has attracted significant research interest historically. Anxiety disorders are among the most common mental disorders. They generally appear early in life and share, however, with other mental disorders, a deliberately chronic evolution, and a strong functional impact. An increase in global anxiety prevalence represents a significant threat to the population's well-being and quality of life [3]

The other anxiety disorders were evaluated in only some of the study areas. The prevalence of PTSD was 1% in Saint Louis (0.5% in men, 1.3% in women; 3.5% in crime victims, 20% in Vietnam veterans). GAD has a 12-month prevalence of 2.3% in Durham, NC (0.8% in men and 2.6% in women) and is not comorbid with another psychiatric disorder in two cases out of three.

## Types of Anxiety Disorders

### Generalized Anxiety Disorder

Generalized anxiety disorder involves continuous and excessive worry that interferes with daily activities. This ongoing stress and worry may be accompanied by physical symptoms, such as difficulty concentrating, restlessness, easily fatigued, muscle tension or problems sleeping. Mostly the worries focus on everyday things such as financial problems, job responsibilities, family issues or minor matters.

### Panic Disorder

This includes,

- Trembling or shaking
- Feeling of shortness of breath
- Palpitations, pounding heart or rapid heart rate
- Sweating
- Chest pain
- Feeling detached
- Feeling dizzy, light-headed or faint
- Feeling of choking
- Numbness or tingling

Panic attacks may occur with other mental disorders such as depression or PTSD.

### Phobias, Specific Phobia

A specific phobia is excessive and constant fear of a specific object, situation or activity that is generally not harmful. These fears cause such distress that some people go to extreme lengths to avoid what they fear. Patients know their fear is excessive, but they can't overcome it. Examples are, public speaking fear of lift or fear of swimming.

### Agoraphobia

Agoraphobia is an anxiety disorder that causes an extreme fear of becoming overwhelmed or unable to escape or get help. Because of fear and anxiety, people with agoraphobia often avoid new places and unfamiliar situations, like:

- Large, open areas or enclosed spaces.
- Crowds.
- Places outside of their home.
- Public transportation.

### Social Anxiety Disorder (previously called social phobia)

Social anxiety disorder (formerly known as social phobia) is a mental health condition where you experience intense and ongoing fear of being judged negatively and/or watched by others.

Social anxiety disorder is a common anxiety disorder. Common examples are extreme fear of public speaking, meeting new people or eating/drinking in public. The fear or anxiety causes problems with daily functioning and lasts at least six months.

### Separation Anxiety Disorder

Separation anxiety disorder (SAD) is an anxiety disorder in which an individual experiences excessive anxiety regarding separation from home and/or from people to whom the individual has a strong emotional attachment (e.g., a parent, caregiver, significant other, or siblings). A person with separation anxiety disorder may be persistently worried about losing the person closest to him or her, may be reluctant or refuse to go out or sleep away from home or without that person, or may experience nightmares about separation. Physical symptoms of distress often develop in childhood, but symptoms can carry through adulthood.

### Selective Mutism

Selective mutism is an anxiety disorder where a person is unable to speak in certain social situations, such as with classmates at school or to relatives they do not see very often.

It usually starts during childhood and, if left untreated, can persist into adulthood.

Selective mutism most commonly begins before age 5, but it may not be formally identified until the child enters school. For children who also have social anxiety disorder, selective mutism may disappear, but symptoms of social anxiety disorder may remain.

### Symptoms of anxiety disorder

Symptoms vary depending on the type of anxiety disorder you have. General symptoms of an anxiety disorder include:

Physical symptoms:

- Cold or sweaty hands.
- Dry mouth.
- Muscle tension.
- Nausea.
- Shortness of breath.
- Numbness or tingling in hands or feet.
- Heart palpitations.

Mental symptoms:

- Repeated thoughts or flashbacks of traumatic experiences.
- Feeling panic, fear and uneasiness.
- Nightmares.
- Uncontrollable, obsessive thoughts.

Behavioral symptoms:

- Inability to be still and calm.
- Ritualistic behaviors, such as washing hands repeatedly.
- Trouble sleeping

## Causes and risk factors of anxiety disorder

### Causes

The causes of anxiety disorders aren't fully understood. Life experiences such as traumatic events appear to trigger anxiety disorders in people who are already prone to anxiety. Inherited traits also can be a factor.

### Medical causes

Examples of medical problems that can be linked to anxiety include:

- Diabetes
- Heart disease
- Drug misuse or withdrawal
- Thyroid problems, such as hyperthyroidism
- Respiratory disorders, such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and asthma
- Rare tumors that produce certain fight-or-flight hormones
- Withdrawal from alcohol, anti-anxiety medications (benzodiazepines) or other medications

It's possible that your anxiety may be due to an underlying medical condition if:

- You didn't have an anxiety disorder as a child
- You have a sudden occurrence of anxiety that seems unrelated to life events and you didn't have a previous history of anxiety
- You don't avoid certain things or situations because of anxiety
- You don't have any blood relatives (such as a parent or sibling) with an anxiety disorder

### Risk factors

These factors may increase your risk of developing an anxiety disorder:

- Stress due to an illness- Serious illness can cause significant worry about issues such as your treatment and your future.
- Trauma- Children who have witnessed traumatic events are at higher risk of developing an anxiety disorder at some point in life. Adults who experience a traumatic event also can develop anxiety disorders.
- Stress buildup- A big event or a buildup of smaller stressful life situations may trigger excessive anxiety — for example, a death in the family, work stress.
- Having blood relatives with an anxiety disorder
- Drugs or alcohol- Drug or alcohol use or withdrawal can cause anxiety.[7]

### Diagnosis

For diagnosis, a doctor performs a physical exam, asks about symptoms, and recommends a blood test, which helps to determine if another condition, such as hypothyroidism, may be causing your symptoms.

The doctor may also ask about any medications which a person is taking. Certain medications may cause symptoms of anxiety. These include levodopa, cyclosporine, etc.

If the doctor does not find an underlying cause of the symptoms, he or she performs a psychological evaluation.

### Psychological Evaluation

During a psychological evaluation, a specialist asks for family history of an anxiety disorder or depression. He or she asks about symptoms—when they started, how long they have lasted, how severe they are, whether they have occurred before, and, if so, how they were treated.

Other psychological conditions, including post-traumatic stress disorder and eating disorders, may accompany anxiety disorders. For this reason, the specialist also asks questions that allow him or her to evaluate whether another psychological condition could be affecting the patient.[8]

### Natural Ways to Reduce Anxiety

There are many natural ways to reduce anxiety and help you feel better, including:

- Eating a healthy diet. Diets rich in vegetables, fruits, high-quality meats, fish, nuts, and whole grains can lower the risk of developing anxiety disorders, but diet alone is probably not enough to treat them.
- Trying meditation- Meditation-based therapy may significantly reduce symptoms in people with anxiety disorders.
- Practicing yoga- Regular yoga practice may reduce symptoms in people with anxiety disorders, but more high quality research is needed.

- Limiting caffeine- Excessive caffeine intake may worsen feelings of anxiety in some people, especially those with anxiety disorders.
- Abstaining from alcohol- Drinking alcohol can affect your anxiety, so it may help to stay away from alcoholic beverages.
- Quitting smoking- Smoking may increase the the risk of developing an anxiety disorder.

## Homoeopathic medicines for Anxiety Disorder

### ACONITUM NAPELLUS

This medicine is used for intense, sudden anxiety, panic, or fear. Panic could be connected to past trauma. *Great fear, anxiety*, and worry accompany every ailment, however trivial. *Fears death* but believes that he will soon die; predicts the day. *Fears the future*, a crowd, crossing the street. *Restlessness*, tossing about.

### ARGENTUM NITRICUM

It is the best remedy for claustrophobia, hypochondria, fear of heights, or fear of everyday things. Fearful and *nervous*; impulse to jump out of window. Errors of perception. *Impulsive; wants to do things in a hurry. Peculiar mental impulses.* Fears and anxieties and hidden irrational motives for actions. This is accompanied with digestive disturbance, like diarrhea, and sweets cravings.

### ARSENICUM ALBUM

In this there is fear of loneliness, darkness, or being imperfect. *Great anguish and restlessness. Changes place continually. Fears*, of death, of being left alone. Great fear, with cold sweat. Thinks it useless to take medicine. Suicidal.

### CALCAREA CARBONICA

*This is a good remedy for anxiety disorder. Apprehensive*; worse towards evening; *fears loss of reason, misfortune.* Anxiety worsens when plans are changed, and they show difficulty in “going with the flow.” Anxiety with palpitation. Obstnacy; slight mental effort produces hot head. Averse to work or exertion.

### GELSEMIUM SEMPERVIRENS

People with this type of anxiety are often timid and shaky. Desire to be quiet, to be left alone. They may experience agoraphobia, avoid crowds or public speaking, and be vulnerable to fainting. They often also desire solitude and avoid insistent pressure from other people. Child starts and grasps the nurse, and screams as if afraid of falling.

### IGNATIA AMARA

Is is the best medicine for those experiencing anxiety from grief or loss. People who fit this description are often very sensitive and prone to mood swings, moving from laughter to tears. Changeable mood; introspective; silently brooding. Melancholic, sad, tearful. Not communicative. *Sighing and sobbing.* After shocks, grief, disappointment.

### KALIUM PHOSPHORICUM

Anxiety, *nervous dread*, lethargy. Indisposition to meet people. Extreme lassitude and depression. Great despondency

about business. Shyness; disinclined to converse. Brain-fag; hysteria; *night terrors.* Somnambulance. Loss of memory.

### STRAMONIUM

This is for anxiety that also includes night terrors, nightmares, or dark thoughts while awake. People with this type of anxiety are often scared of the dark or being alone and are especially scared by thoughts of monsters or mysterious figures. Sees ghosts, hears voices, talks with spirits. Rapid changes from joy to sadness. Their imaginations tend to worsen their anxiety.[10]

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