

Unit - 2

I - Anxiety Disorders.

* Introduction

- The term anxiety is usually defined as diffuse, vague, very unpleasant feeling of fear and apprehension. Anxious person worries a lot, particularly about unknown danger.
- The anxious individual shows combinations of following symptoms: rapid heart rate, shortness of breath, diarrhea, loss of appetite, fainting, dizziness, sweating, sleeplessness, frequent urination, and tremors. All these physical symptoms accompany fear as well as anxiety.
- Fear differs from anxiety in that people who have fears can easily state what they are afraid of. People who feel anxious, on the other hand are not afraid aware of the reasons for their fear. Thus even though fear and anxiety involve similar reactions the cause of worry is readily apparent in the former case but is not at all clear in the latter.

20/11/20

For persons suffering from anxiety disorders, intrusive thoughts often take the form of worries about possible future events and outcomes, or catastrophic interpretation of past events that emphasize the negative, especially with regards to mistakes an individual might have made.

- These intrusive worries and exaggeratedly distressing interpretations are characteristics of the anxiety experience.
- The characteristics of anxiety include feelings of uncertainty, helplessness, and physiological arousal. A person who experiences anxiety complains of feeling nervous, tense, jumpy and irritable. An anxious person becomes fatigued easily and can have "butterflies in the stomach" as well as headaches, muscle tension and difficulty concentrating.
- Anxiety has been discussed in many cultures for many hundreds of years. The Romans has a word *anxieta* which indicated a lasting state of fearfulness. This contrasted with their word *angor* which signified a momentary state of intense fear, akin to our concept of panic.

Symptoms of High Anxiety

- Nervousness
- Tension
- Feeling tired
- Dizziness
- Frequent urination
- Heart palpitation
- Feeling faint
- Breathlessness
- Sweating
- Trembling
- Worry and apprehension
- Sleeplessness
- Difficulty in concentrating
- Hypervigilance.

- There are four types of
- Generalized anxiety disorder
 - Panic disorder
 - Phobic
 - Obsessive compulsive disorders

— Close to 20% of adults have been diagnosed as having an anxiety disorder. In addition, anxiety disorders frequently co-occur with other conditions, especially depression. Many people have more than one anxiety disorder, and women are more likely than men to have some form of anxiety disorder.

Causes of Anxiety.

→ Behavioural and cognitive factors

- Behaviourists believe that anxious behavioral reactions are learned.

They see phobias, for example, as nothing more than classically conditioned fear responses, as was the "Little Albert"

- Cognitive psychologists see anxiety disorders as the results of illogical, irrational thought processes.

- Magnificent - tendency to interpret situations as being far more harmful, dangerous or embarrassing than they actually are

- All or nothing thinking. - Tendency to believe that his/her performance must be perfect or the result will be a total failure.

- Overgeneralisation a single negative event interpreted as a never-ending defeat

- Minimization giving little or no emphasis to ones successes or positive event.

These are the examples of irrational thinking.

→ Biological Factors

- General disorders, including generalised anxiety disorder, panic disorders, phobias and Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, tends to run in families, pointing to a genetic basis for these disorders.
- Furthermore, genetic factors in PTSD seem to influence both the risk of developing the disorder and the likelihood individuals may be involved in potentially dangerous situations.
- Functional neuroimaging, an area of the limbic system studies have revealed that the amygdala, an area of the limbic system, is more active in phobic people responding to pictures of spiders than in nonphobic people and also more active in individuals with PTSD & social anxiety disorder, suggesting excessive conditioning and exaggerated responses to stimuli that would typically elicit minimal fear-related responses.

Cultural Variations:

- Anxiety disorders are found around the world, although the particular form the disorder takes might be different in various cultures.
- For example, in some Latin American cultures anxiety can take the form of "ataque of nervios" or 'attack of nerves' in which the person may have fits of crying, shout uncontrollably, experience sensations of heat, and become very aggressive, either verbally or physically. These attacks usually come after some stressful event such as the death of a loved one. (APA 2013)
- Several syndromes that are essentially types of phobias are specific to certain cultures.
 - For eg. *Koro → found in China a few other South Asian & East Asian countries → involves fear that one's genitals are shrinking.
 - * taijin kyofusho → found in Japan → involves fear and anxiety that one will do something in public that is socially inappropriate or embarrassing such as blushing, staring or having an offensive bodily odor.