

PANIC DISORDER

PATHOLOGY & CAUSES

Recurrent panic attacks sudden periods of intense fear/discomfort

Attacks unpredictable.

CAUSES

May be genetic, environmental; higher in some groups

Associated with major depressive disorder, social and generalized anxiety disorders.

obsessive-compulsive disorder

SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

Feelings of choking, derealization, fear of losing control/dying

Elevated heart rate, chest pain/discomfort, sweating, trembling, shortness of breath, nausea, dizziness, chills, numbness

DIAGNOSIS

Recurrent, unpredictable panic attacks (> two)

Distress affects day-to-day functioning

Behavioral changes to avoid further attacks

Presence of > four symptoms

Not explained by other condition/substance

TREATMENT

MEDICATIONS

SSRIs and other antidepressants,

benzodiazepines

Antiseizure medications

PSYCHOTHERAPY

E.g. cognitive behavioral therapy