



HOMOEOPATHICITY FOR SEPARATION ANXIETY DISORDER PATIENTS

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ABSTRACT

“Anxiety” is a common behavioral pattern for any individual to deal with threats. Anxiety in limit shows the emotion but when it is expressed excessively or beyond developmentally appropriate periods, it becomes a disorder. ⁽¹⁾ People tend to ignore the disorder miscalculating it as a routine life. The most common disorder seen in childhood and to some extent in an adult is separation anxiety disorder which, most of the time, goes unrecognized. ⁽³⁾ 4% of the population suffers from SAD with an increase to 7.6% in pediatric cases. ⁽³⁾ When the cases are left untreated, one third of them leads to persistence of disorder in adulthood.

Our masters might not have recognized the anxiety disorders in their days but they surely left behind an ample of medicines to cure the patients suffering from it. Homoeopathy ensures the cure to any psychiatric disorder and no doubt works wonderfully in cases of anxiety disorder.

INTRODUCTION

In simple words, separation anxiety disorder regards to a state where an individual has continuous fear of separation from the attached figure or fear of their attachment figure getting hurt or injured in any way.

SAD is mostly seen in children, starting from age of 6 months and lasts till the age of 3 years. And if left untreated can be carried to adolescent period. Normally, the disorder goes away as the child's cognitive thinking develops but in some cases it stays in a form of trauma.

Adults can also suffer from the disorder acquired at their age or the disorder was left untreated in their childhood. Males and females are equally affected by SAD.

To cure this disease is utmost important because it affects a person in childhood and can stay with him lifelong, hampering his emotional and physical aspects which can lead to a loss in social welfare if the prevalence increases. Hence, to uproot this disease Homoeopathy plays a major role.

Homoeopathy considers the patient in the light of individualization and as a result patient's thinking pattern, his will, understanding, reactions to the source of their anxiety etc. are judged properly leading to a similar medicine.

But to actually understand a patient, a physician needs a lot of patience as the people suffering from SAD or any kind of psychiatric disorders are always unconvinced, in haste and unapproachable. Yet the cure is only possible under homoeopathic treatment.



DIAGNOSTIC CRITERIA FOR SEPARATION ANXIETY DISORDER⁽¹⁾

Excessive and developmentally inappropriate worry or anxiety over being separated from people to whom the person is bonded, as shown by three or more of the following:

1. Frequent and severe distress when preparing for or going through a separation from one's home or from significant attachment figures.

2. Excessive and on-going concern about the death, illness, injury, or disaster that could affect important attachment figures.
3. An overwhelming and on-going fear of going through an unfortunate incident (such as getting lost, being abducted, getting into an accident, or getting sick) that separates from a significant attachment figure.
4. A persistent fear of being alone that prevents a person from going outside, to work, school, or anyplace else.
5. An extreme and on-going anxiety of being alone themselves or without significant attachment figures, whether at home or in other environments.
6. A persistent aversion to sleeping anywhere other than at home or away from a significant attachment figure.
7. Recurrent dreams with the idea of being apart.
8. Recurrent reports of physical symptoms (such as headaches, nausea, vomiting, or stomach-aches) that arise when one is separated from important attachment figures or is expected to do so.

The avoidance, fear, or worry is long-lasting; in children and adolescents, it lasts at least four weeks, and in adults, it usually lasts for six months or longer.

The disruption impairs social, intellectual, occupational, or other critical domains of functioning or results in clinically severe distress.

No other mental illness provides a more compelling explanation for the disturbance.

The disturbance is not better explained by another mental illness, such as an excessive resistance to change in autism spectrum disorder that prevents the person from leaving the house; delusions or hallucinations about separation in psychotic disorders; agoraphobia that prevents the person from leaving the house without a trusted companion; generalized anxiety disorder that causes the person to worry about their own health or the health of others they care about; or illness anxiety disorder that causes the person to worry about being sick.

ASSOCIATED FEATURES^(1,4)

Children show variety of symptoms when separated from the attachment figures such as apathy, sadness, difficulty in concentrating, fears of various things leading to delusions etc.

Children with such disorder are explained as cranky, demanding, constant need of attention etc. they refuse to go to school which leads to academic difficulties.

They refuse to sleep alone as a result of nightmares with a theme of separation.

Physical symptoms can also be seen such as muscle tension, rapid breathing, palpitations etc.

We can see that in children the attacks are because separation from parents, guardians or caretakers but in adults the anxiety attacks are due to separation from their offspring or spouse which leads to disturbance in their work as they have a constant need to check on them.



DIFFERENTIAL DIAGNOSIS⁽¹⁾

Panic disorder: Fear of being alone could cause excruciating anxiety or even a panic attack. As opposed to being immobilized by an unplanned panic episode, separation anxiety disorder is characterized by worry about the likelihood of being separated from attachment figures and about unfortunate things happening to them.

Agoraphobia: In contrast to agoraphobics, separation anxiety disorder sufferers do not worry about being confined or unable to flee circumstances from which escape is viewed as challenging in the event of panic attacks or other incapacitating symptoms.

Social anxiety problem: Social anxiety disorder, often known as social phobia, may be the cause of school refusal. In such cases, the avoidance of school is not because of concerns about being cut off from the attachment figures; rather, it stems from a fear of negative judgment from others.

Bereavement: While fear of being cut off from other attachment figures is at the core of separation anxiety disorder, intense yearning or longing for the deceased, intense sorrow and emotional pain, and obsession with the deceased or the circumstances of the death are typical reactions occurring in bereavement.

HOMOEOPATHIC MANAGEMENT

There are huge numbers of remedies which can help with anxiety disorder. But children with anxiety disorders can be dealt with some important remedies in material medica books in homoeopathy.

Lac group remedies for children who never had the warmth of the mother or were detached from her. They feel forsaken, insecure, melancholy, agoraphobia, lack of friends, feeling of being let down, as if they are breaking into pieces, lack of love etc. They get absent minded with weak minded and poor self-esteem. Also they have nightmares of losing a beloved one. Due to their mental state, physical symptoms also start to surface such as bulimia or anorexia, migraine, photophobia etc.

Magnesium group is well known for the children who feel as if they are orphan as the master Kent would describe. They have ailments from foresakenness, mental distress, grief, shocks,

blows etc. They dream of weddings and feasts as there is lack of happiness in their life, dreams of being alone, gone astray, lost her way, of being abandoned by family or friends and during dreams they feel as if all the emotions have come alive.⁽⁶⁾

Natrum group people are also known for the grief they feel after getting separated from a lover which leads to them crying in alone. They are never good at showing their feelings because when they were children, their parents provided them with all the material things but not love as a result the patients can never show their feelings. Many times we confuse natrum patients with magnesium's but the sole difference between them is the natrums suppress their feelings while magnesiums repress them.⁽⁶⁾

Staphysagria patient believes that his wife will leave him. And in childhood he had ill effects because of scolding or punishment.⁽⁵⁾

Lycopodium patients have homesickness. Their constipation starts from confinement or when away from home.^(5,2)

Chamomilla child always wants to be carried and petted, they are irritable and restless.⁽⁵⁾

There are hundreds of medicines which can be used to cure anxiety disorders but for a permanent cure, medicine has to be similimum. The medicine should have homoeopathicity with the patient as our master Kent has said.⁽⁷⁾

CONCLUSION

Although the children are at high risk for separation anxiety disorder, the adults aren't from the disorder. Even pet dogs feel the separation anxiety when their caretakers leave and they show destructive behavior.⁽⁸⁾

To cope with anxiety is easy but to deal with a disorder where there are periods of attacks and remission is more than difficult.

Anxiety is manifested when there is any kind of separation i.e. death of a loved one, parental divorce, moving to a new neighbourhood, immigration, illness of an individual etc. The environmental factors play an important role.⁽¹⁾

It's possible that separation anxiety disorder runs in families. In a community sample of six-year-old twins, the estimated heritability was 73%, with higher rates in girls. Youngsters suffering from separation anxiety disorder have a heightened sensitivity to respiratory stimulation when exposed to CO₂-enriched air.

So to cut the chain of this hereditary separation anxiety disorder, Homoeopathic medicines are the only option.

People should be made aware of SAD as well as its management because many would have ignored the anxiety symptoms.

This can help patients improve their mental stability, work area, skills, relations and as a result a better lifestyle.

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