

Psychology

Topic of the Month

GENERALIZED ANXIETY DISORDER

This is a condition characterized by a period of about 6 months or more of chronic exaggerated worry and tension that is unfounded or much more severe than the normal anxiety most people experience.

People with GAD usually expect the worst.

They worry excessively about everything such as family, work, health even when there are no signs of concern.

They find it difficult to relax and will often suffer from sleep deprivation.

Sometimes the source of the worry is hard to pinpoint. Simply the thought of getting through the day provokes anxiety.

Many people with GAD also have physical symptoms, such: hot or cold flashes, heart palpitations, fatigue, shaking, irritability muscle tension or headaches.

People with GAD may feel out of breath or even lightheaded. They also may feel nauseated or have to go to the bathroom frequently.

Nearly 3% of the adult US population age 18 to 54 has GAD during the course of a given year.

According to a national epidemiological survey carried out in Lebanon on the lifetime prevalence of mental health disorders in 2006, showed that the Lebanese population have high rates of anxiety disorders not limited to GAD but others as well such as PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) and separation anxiety disorder, due to both individual events and cumulative exposure to war.

GAD most often strikes in childhood or adolescence, but can also begin in adulthood. It affects women more often than men, may run in families, and may also grow worse with stress.

GAD often coexists with depression, substance abuse, and other anxiety disorders.

Irritable Bowel Syndrome can often accompany GAD.

Treatment for GAD can include a combination of approaches such as cognitive-behavioral therapy, neurofeedback therapy, medica-

-tion, autogenic therapy, clinical hypnotherapy and even sound therapy.

Many of these therapies are not known by a vast majority of people which explains the reason why many people do not seek treatment until their suffering is at a peak.

References:

Karam, E.G.& al. (2006). Prevalence and treatment of mental disorders in Lebanon: a national epidemiological survey", Volume 367, Number 9515: 1000-1006.

Narrow WE, Rae DS, Regier DA. NIMH epidemiology note: prevalence of anxiety disorders. One-year prevalence best estimates calculated from ECA and NCS data. Population estimates based on U.S. Census estimated residential population age 18 to 54 on July 1, 1998. Unpublished.

Regier DA, Rae DS, Narrow WE, et al. Prevalence of anxiety disorders and their comorbidity with mood and addictive disorders. *British Journal of Psychiatry Supplement*, 1998; (34): 24-8.

RELAXATION TRAINING:

Anyone can learn how to center oneself on a daily basis. All it requires is to have a good understanding of the benefits of relaxing — and then, finding the time, will not be an issue.

Here are some benefits: slower heart rate and blood pressure, reduced stress hormones, relieving muscle tension, clearing your mind & stronger immune system.

For more useful info you could also check: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Relaxation_technique

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