



HOMOEOPATHIC APPROACH IN THE MANAGEMENT OF ANXIETY DISORDERS

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Abstract:

Anxiety disorders are the most prevalent psychiatric disorders and present in patients as excessive fear and worry. Anxiety has both a cognitive-behavioral component, expressed in worrying and wariness, and a physiological component, mediated by the autonomic nervous system. There is a high comorbidity between anxiety (especially generalized anxiety disorders or panic disorders) and depressive disorders or between anxiety disorders. If left untreated, anxiety disorders can cause significant personal, social, and occupational impairment. Elevated anxiety levels can lead to a fight-or-flight fear response. Anxiety disorders should be treated with psychological therapy, pharmacotherapy, or a combination of both. Cognitive behavioral therapy can be regarded as the psychotherapy with the highest level of evidence. Homoeopathy is a well-established therapeutic system with potential relevance to psychiatry.

Keywords: Anxiety Disorders, Homoeopathic Remedies, Pediatrics, Adolescents, Separation Anxiety Disorder, Social Anxiety Disorder, Generalized Anxiety Disorder, Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder, Phobias, Posttraumatic Stress Disorder , And Panic Disorder.

Introduction:

Anxiety disorders are the most prevalent psychiatric disorders and are associated with a high burden of illness. ^(1,2) Anxiety disorders are characterized by pathologic anxiety, in which anxiety becomes disabling, interfering with social interactions, development, and achievement of goals or quality of life, and can lead to low self-esteem, social withdrawal, and academic underachievement. ⁽³⁾

Women are 1.5 to two times more likely than men to receive a diagnosis of anxiety disorder. ⁽⁴⁾ The average age of onset of anxiety disorder is 11 yrs. Age of onset for anxiety disorders differs among the disorders. Separation anxiety disorder and specific phobia start during childhood, with a median age of onset of 7 years, followed by SAD (13 years), agoraphobia without panic attacks (20 years), and panic disorder (24 years). ⁽⁵⁾ GAD may start even later in life. After the age of 50, a marked decrease in the prevalence of anxiety disorders has been observed in epidemiological studies. ^(5,6,7) Anxiety disorders are the most prevalent psychiatric disorders (with a current worldwide prevalence of 7.3% [4.8%-10.9%]). Among them, specific phobias are the most common with a prevalence of 10.3%, then panic disorder (with or without agoraphobia) is the next most common with a prevalence of 6.0%, followed by social phobia (2.7%) and generalized anxiety disorder (2.2%).

The current conceptualization of the etiology of anxiety disorders includes an interaction of psychosocial factors such as childhood adversity or stressful events, and a genetic vulnerability. ⁽⁸⁾

Classification of anxiety disorders: Separation anxiety disorder (SAD), childhood-onset social phobia or social anxiety disorder, generalized anxiety

disorder (GAD), obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), phobias, posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and panic disorder (PD) are all defined by the occurrence of either diffuse or specific anxiety.⁽³⁾

- Separation Anxiety Disorder: It is characterized by “developmentally inappropriate and excessive anxiety concerning separation from home or from those to whom the individual is attached. It is one of the most common childhood anxiety disorders, with a prevalence of 3.5–5.4%.⁽⁹⁾ SAD is characterized by unrealistic and persistent worries about separation from the home or a major attachment figure.⁽³⁾
- social anxiety disorder: it is a debilitating and chronic illness characterized by “a marked and persistent fear of one or more social or performance situations involving exposure to unfamiliar people or possible scrutiny by others.⁽¹⁰⁾
- Panic disorder: it is a syndrome of recurrent, discrete episodes of marked fear or discomfort in which patients experience abrupt onset of physical and psychological symptoms called panic attacks.⁽³⁾ PD with or without agoraphobia, is one of the most common and important anxiety disorders in the general population in the Western world with a prevalence in one year of 2-3% in Europe.⁽¹¹⁾ Patients with PD have an impaired social and work life, and an overall reduced quality of life.^(12.13)
- Generalized anxiety disorder: it occurs in children who often experience unrealistic worries about different events or activities for at least 6 mo with at least 1 somatic complaint. GAD often manifests with somatic symptoms, including restlessness, fatigue, problems concentrating, irritability, muscle tension, and sleep disturbance⁽³⁾
- Phobias: Children with phobias avoid specific objects or situations that reliably trigger physiologic arousal (e.g., dogs, spiders) The fear is excessive and unreasonable and can be cued by the presence or

anticipation of the feared trigger, with anxiety symptoms occurring immediately.⁽³⁾

- Obsessive-compulsive disorder: OCD is characterized by intrusive, troubling thoughts (obsessions), and repetitive, ritualistic behaviors (compulsions) which are time consuming, significantly impair functioning and/or cause distress.^(14,15) Common obsessions include contamination fears, worries about harm to self or others, the need for symmetry, exactness and order, religious/moralistic concerns, forbidden thoughts (e.g., sexual or aggressive), or need to seek reassurance or confess⁽¹⁶⁾. Common compulsions include: cleaning/washing, checking, counting, repeating, straightening, routinized behaviors, confessing, praying, seeking reassurance, touching, tapping or rubbing, and avoidance.⁽¹⁷⁾
- Posttraumatic stress disorder: PTSD is an anxiety disorder resulting from the long- and short-term effects of trauma that cause behavioral and physiologic sequelae in toddlers, children, and adolescents. It also results from experiencing or witnessing an emotionally traumatic event that is perceived to present a threat to the life or physical integrity of one's self or others.^(18,19)

Clinical features:

- Anxiety may have physical manifestations such as: weight loss, pallor, tachycardia, tremors, muscle cramps, paresthesias, hyperhidrosis, flushing, hyperreflexia, and abdominal tenderness, Difficulty controlling feelings of worry, irritable, fatigue, Shortness of breath, dizziness, nausea, Heart palpitations. Cold, sweaty, numb, or tingling hands or feet, sleep problems.⁽³⁾

Differential Diagnosis: The differential diagnosis of anxiety disorders includes common mental disorders, such as other anxiety disorders, major

depression, and somatic symptom disorders, as well as physical illnesses such as coronary heart or lung diseases, hyperthyroidism, and others. Anxiety disorders often co-occur with other anxiety disorders, major depression, somatic symptom disorders, personality disorders, and substance abuse disorders (20)

Homoeopathic Management: There are many homeopathic remedies for anxiety disorders. Some of them are as:

- **Aconitum Napellus:** panic attack that comes on suddenly with very strong fear (even fear of death) may indicate this remedy state of immense anxiety may be accompanied by strong palpitations, shortness of breath, and flushing of the face
- **Argentum Nitricum:** This is recommended for people with anxiety that is due to uncertainty. This includes claustrophobia, hypochondria, fear of heights, or fear of everyday things. This relieves apprehension or stage fright accompanied by agitation and a feeling of hurriedness.
- **Arsenicum Album:** anxiety due to fear of loneliness, darkness, or being imperfect. People with this type of anxiety fear being alone and may relieve anxiety through control or criticism of others. Obsessive about small details and very neat, they may feel a desperate need to be in control of everything. people who are deeply anxious about their health, and extremely concerned with order and security.
- **Calcarea Carbonica:** Anxiety worsens when plans are changed, and they show difficulty in “going with the flow.” This remedy is usually indicated for dependable, solid people who become overwhelmed from physical illness or too much work and start to fear a breakdown. thoughts can be muddled and confused when tired, which adds to the anxiety.
- **Gelsemium:** anxiety due to feelings of inadequacy. People are often timid and shaky. They experience agoraphobia, avoid crowds or public

speaking, and be vulnerable to fainting, often also desire solitude and avoid insistent pressure from other people.

- **Ignatia Amara:** Anxiety from grief or loss. sensitive and prone to mood swings, moving from laughter to tears. Ignatia is also recommended for depression. All symptoms are improved by distraction.
- **Kali Arsenicosum:** This is for anxiety that is health-based. Conditions include hypochondria, excessive grooming, and even fear of heart attacks. People with health-based anxiety may have racing thoughts and difficulty sleeping. They may also fear death or dying. Children are prone to feeling cold and vulnerable to panic attacks.
- **Kali Phosphoricum:** This is indicated for those who are vulnerable to stress or becoming overwhelmed. Their anxiety stems from having too much to do or ambitions that are daunting. When a child has been exhausted by overwork or illness and feels a deep anxiety and inability to cope, this remedy is helpful.
- **Lycopodium:** This is indicated for people who lack self-confidence. fear speaking in public and have stage fright, they hide it well. They might cover it up with talking loudly or too frequently.
- **Natrium Muriaticum:** Deep emotions and a self-protective shyness can make these children seem reserved. Even when feeling lonely, they tend to stay away from social situations, not knowing what to say or do. Easily hurt and offended. Claustrophobia, anxiety at night (with fears of robbers or intruders), migraines, and insomnia are often seen when this remedy is needed.
- **Phosphorus:** this is indicated for people with social people with anxiety. Strong anxiety can be triggered by thinking of almost anything. When anxious or vexed, their thoughts get scattered and they have a difficult

time focusing or getting things done. Their anxiety may be tied to a need for approval in social circles or from romantic partners.

- **Pulsatilla:** This is for people with childlike anxiety. They may need lots of reassurance and support from others to feel better. Children express anxiety as insecurity and clinginess, with a need for constant support and comforting. Child is moody, tearful, whiny, even emotionally childish.
- **Silicea:** It's for people who fear experiencing new things, talking in front of people, and getting a lot of attention. They tend to become workaholics to soothe their fears.
- **Stramonium:** This is for anxiety that also includes night terrors, nightmares, or dark thoughts while awake. People are often scared of the dark or being alone and are especially scared by thoughts of monsters or mysterious figures. Their imaginations tend to worsen their anxiety.

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