

## Discussion on Anxiety and Concerns around It

Kritika Pandey

B.A.M.S Intern, Chaudhary Brahma Prakash Ayurved Charak Sansthan, New Delhi

**Corresponding author:** Kritika Pandey

**Email** – pandeykritika504@gmail.com

“Generalized anxiety disorder is characterized by marked symptoms of anxiety that persist for at least several months, for more days than not, manifested by either general apprehension (i.e. ‘free-floating anxiety’) or excessive worry focused on multiple everyday events, most often concerning family, health, finances, and school or work, together with additional symptoms such as muscular tension or motor restlessness, sympathetic autonomic over activity, subjective experience of nervousness, difficulty maintaining concentration, irritability, or sleep disturbance. The symptoms result in significant distress or significant impairment in personal, family, social, educational, occupational, or other important areas of functioning. The symptoms are not a manifestation of another health condition and are not due to the effects of a substance or medication on the central nervous system.”

Anxiety disorders are characterized by feeling anxious, worrying, avoidance and somatic symptoms relating to autonomic arousal. Mainly, it has three subtypes.

**Panic disorder:** It is repeated attacks of severe anxiety. It has no relation to any circumstance or situation.

**Phobia anxiety disorder:** It is an abnormal or excessive fear of a certain object or situation.

**Generalized anxiety disorder:** It is a chronic anxiety state relating consistent worrying.

The factor plaguing mental health in terms of anxiety is mainly building a situation in one's mind and overthinking about it even when it has not occurred. Thinking of all the negative which might occur. Also, with no assurance that it will. A strategy to be prepared for the worst in order to not suffer much when it happens. Also, it includes many other factors, genetic being one.

As per WHO, one in thirteen suffers from this disorder throughout the world. The main issue regarding this disease is awareness. During my posting in the O.P.D., I often glimpsed different reactions from the patients for the same disease. Typically, this totally depends on the person how they react to a particular situation. For me, some set patterns in the patients were consistent. I decided to keep a note of that. At that time, I could not do much. I was only posted to observe, not interfere. During that time, I did what I was supposed to. Just like everyone else I considered mental health to be secondary and started concentrating on what are the complaints for which the patient had come.

Anxiety was not unusual to me. Every time I see one likewise, I was assured I have seen this pattern. It can be genetic. This is how I got it. Once I started interning, I started asking. My records were dispersed. In my hospital, we had an average of 100 patients per O.P.D. per day which again hindered my intentions. I thereby decided to conduct a survey on the population from the age group 18-30. It comprised around 100 people out of which 62 participated.

The survey incorporates eight questions. Do you know Anxiety is a disorder? Do you know anyone suffering from the same? State the most common symptoms you witnessed? What is the frequency and duration of the attacks? How do you fight it? What are the triggers?

According to you, do people still neglect it? How to spread awareness?

To the first and the fundamental question, 67.74% replied YES, 17.74% replied MAYBE, 14.52% replied NO. Without neglecting the fact, the age group from 18-30 is active on every platform. Anything which is in the talk, they perceive about it. Rather, recently I have seen people mimicking anxiety out of trend. Despite this, I was not expecting 32.26% to be in denial.

I got a variety of answers from this survey. Also, out of all the 67.74% who claimed they know that anxiety is a disorder, did not know what anxiety is. In their answer, symptoms comprised of the symptoms generally

seen in anxiety to the symptom inclining towards depression and has nothing to do with anxiety. The frequency individually fluctuated from thrice a day to once every three months. Duration varied from the whole night or day to 5 mins per attack. Everyone had a distinct way to tackle it. Some habituated addictions, some chose friends and family, some grabbed brain tonic or medications. Triggering factor, in general, was overthinking and for some, it was a certain situation. Negligence is obvious. About awareness, mostly stated educating through campaigns and other platforms.

Which brings us to the fact that prominent issue regarding any mental disorder is a scarcity of knowledge and denial. One who even recognizes it will try to refute it. The highly active population lacks awareness. By this evidence, can someone even visualize the obliviousness as well as denial in the age group above the ones targeted in this survey?

Being a partaker in healthcare, now I discern how difficult it is to ascertain a patient that they possess a mental disorder. Obviously, it is not cancer or haemorrhoids. No one sees blood, it is not on any documents. How will you convince them that they are not mad or insane and mental health is not all about insanity. One of the participants of the survey said, even anxiety can kill you. Is this concern not enough to assess this disorder? It is credible that mental health is as important as physical health. WHO in the definition of health entails mental health, social health along with physical health. The question is, are we recognizing this yet? I came up with this question as once I witnessed an incident. A patient once visited a hospital, obviously with some physical disorder. She then had an anxiety attack. She felt like her heart was throbbing, she had breathlessness, hands were trembling and I could notice she was trying to hold her tears back, which she could not. To this condition, a doctor replied it is emerging because her menses are approaching. I was outraged, I have been through that. I could see the signs since she could not explain the symptoms. It was not just her menstruation, it was not all about her physical health. This fetched me the reality check that along with layman, the ones actively participating in health care are in denial, are in a getaway.

Do we even stand a chance against mental health with an approach of avoidance? We mostly talk about laymen not recognizing much about it. Do we ever wonder about how ones who studied about it in detail overlook it? It's a popular saying that a particular doctor recognizes quite a bit about the patient's disorder as soon as he/she arrives at their clinic. How? Because generally, we detect some prominent signs. Unfortunately, we do not pay equal vigilance to the sign related to mental health. Even if some do, they tend to evade. Some who do, think a single session of reassuring or encouraging might benefit. I have heard of the phrase 'it is in your head'. I approve it is, and by all means, the head is the part of the body and a single session will do nothing to treat what is in the head. How about treating DMII in a single session? No? Obviously, it is not just in your head but also in the reports. Also, an add on it is a genetic disorder. Is anxiety not? Then how do people expect they can pull people out of it without making an adequate effort? Not everyone can attend anxiety, but at least if we have studied about it, then we can diagnose and refer.

Therefore, detailed knowledge and keen observation are the keys to fight. This must comprise everyone in the health care sector. Whatever the post or designation may be, education regarding mental health must be mandatory, so that the signs of the same if averted by one then can be acknowledged by another. This is not to be taken lightly and once diagnosed, a reference to the one's expertise in this profession must be done. For the layman, as many campaigns as feasible must be held by the one who understands the anxiety and can make people understand all about it. Accurate and beneficial use of every platform workable must be done for the same. Once, we do our chores well by diagnosing or recognising one with a mental disorder, then only the second step i.e. to battle it, can be done. There are several complications or dilemmas regarding mental health but it can be confronted only if we gaze at the root cause of the same and build a triumphant foundation.

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