



Review Article

POST COVID ANXIETY AND HOMOEOPATHIC MANAGEMENT-A REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

An acute respiratory disease, caused by a novel corona virus (SARS-CoV-2, previously known as 2019-nCoV), the corona virus disease 2019 (COVID-19) has spread worldwide and was officially declared a global pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO) on March 11, 2020. Many patients with Covid-19 after making full recovery have a range of symptoms for weeks or months after infection, of a physiological or psychiatric nature. This Post-Covid condition is often called 'Post-Covid Syndrome', 'Long Covid' or Post-Acute Covid-19. Certain symptoms among Corona virus disease survivors such as depression, anxiety and memory impairment may be related to psychological factors. In the post-Covid psychological issues, Anxiety is a major complication of Covid-19 that may even exacerbate the infection course and the infection may intensify anxiety. Restrictions such as lockdown and social distancing are on ease throughout the globe, however some people find it difficult to re-adapt to normal life. Whether one has been infected with the virus or not, there are implications of the pandemic on our mental health. The destruction of a lifetime's dedication to build up a small business that closed down during lockdown and not holding family members' hands as they die add to physical and mental health impacts. Homoeopathic medicines are efficient in treating anxiety arising as a Post-Covid consequence without any side effects and complications. This review aims to analyze the Post-Covid Anxiety and the role of Homoeopathy in helping the survivors recover from such a sequel.

INTRODUCTION

"Anxiety was born in the very same moment as mankind. And since we will never be able to master it, we will have to learn to live with it - just as we have learned to live with it- just as we have learned to live with storms" -Paulo Coelho.

Corona Virus Disease (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 Virus. Most people infected with the virus will experience mild to moderate respiratory ailments which does not require any special treatment while some will become seriously ill and be in need of medical supervision

while some face death as a dangerous consequence of Covid-19^[1]. The unprecedented Covid-19 pandemic has caused damage to most spheres of human lives^[2]. Many lives have been lost in this global pandemic. Many have suffered and still suffer from the economic impact and the disaster it caused in their personal and social life. Such haphazard changes have multiplied the incidence of mental health disorders. Along with the direct effects of COVID-19, the pandemic has created a situation in which the mental health is affected. In response to the pandemic, countries around the world implemented large scale public and social health measures such as International travel ban, closure of schools, quarantine, movement and social restrictions. The lockdowns and economic downturn have affected the mental health of population adversely^[5]. Anxiety disorders are the most predominant psychiatric disorders of the Post-Covid sequel and the incidence multiplied in recent past^[2].

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Anxiety is a commonly experienced condition that acts as a signal that alerts of a threat or is a response to the threat. It is often expressed as an unpleasant, widespread, indistinct unease, that is accompanied by autonomic symptoms such as headache, perspiration, heart palpitations, sensation of tightness in the chest, abdominal discomfort and restlessness, indicated by an inability to stay still for long^[3].

Anxiety disorders include Generalized Anxiety Disorders (GAD), Panic Disorders (Anxiety Attacks) with or without Agoraphobia, certain phobias, Social Anxiety Disorders (SAD), Obsessive Compulsive Disorders (OCD) and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorders (PTSD). Anxiety disorders are a group of related disorders and are not single disease condition. It can vary from person to person^[4].

Epidemiology

The National Comorbidity Study reported that one of four persons presented the diagnostic criteria for a least of one anxiety disorder and that women are more likely to have an anxiety disorder than men^[3].

Over the course of 2020, about 4 in 10 adults reported symptoms of anxiety and depression, according to a survey by the Kaiser Family Foundation - Up from 1 in 10 in 2019. Some studies have put the rate of people experiencing traumatic stress at about a third of the population^[6].

In the first year of the pandemic, global prevalence of anxiety and depression elevated by a massive 25%, according to a scientific brief released by the World Health Organization (WHO)^[7].

According to a systematic review of data reporting the prevalence of anxiety disorders during the COVID-19 pandemic which was published between 1st January 2020 and 29th January 2021, an additional 76.2 million cases of major anxiety disorder globally, i.e., an increase of 25.6% so as the total prevalence was 4802.4 cases per 100000 population^[5].

Causes of Post-Covid Anxiety

- Social isolation like quarantine and lockdown^[8]
- A long hospital stay post covid infection^[8]
- Stigma around having the virus^[8]
- Occupational worries^[9]
- Financial strains^[9]
- Real or threatened loss of significant object or relationship^[9]
- Unhappy inside home^[9]
- Familial history

Symptoms of Post-Covid Anxiety

- Feeling powerless^[10]
- Low or no motivation for daily chores^[10]
- Feeling tired or burned out^[10]

- Sadness^[10]
- Lack of concentration^[10]
- Insomnia or poor sleep^[10]
- Fatigue^[11]
- Difficulty breathing^[11]
- Brain fog including inability to concentrate and impaired memory^[11]
- Sleep issues^[11]
- Excessive fear

Incidence of Lingering Post-Covid Anxiety

Post-Covid Anxiety can be seen in individuals who went to the hospital with concerning symptoms or who had advanced conditions which required hospital admission. It can also occur in people with mild symptoms of Covid-19 and are self-treated at their houses^[11].

According to Sigmund Freud, 'In man and the organisms that are related to him, the stage of giving birth, as the individual experience of anxiety, seems to have contributed significant characteristics to the expression of the affect of anxiety'^[12]. It can be transferred from mother to child. The occurrence of anxiety in an adult is thought to be a re-occurrence of the previous anxiety experienced by the newborn at the time of feeding from the maternal breast or even the early anxiety experienced at the time of birth^[13]. Risk for anxiety disorders is influenced by genetic, environmental and epigenetic factors^[19].

Women are more negatively impacted than Men. Children are affected by lockdown that led to online schooling. Among students of high school and college, lack of communication with peer groups and lack of exposure to the outside world was of growing concern. Whereas in adults, loss of loved ones, financial stress, loss of jobs and homeschooled children is thought to be some of the causes that is said to have triggered anxiety^[10]. Covid-19 has negatively impacted the lives of all age groups but in different routes.

Self-Care Strategies^[8]

- Regular exercise
- Well balanced meals
- Consistent sleeping schedule
- Deep breath exercise
- Meditation
- Communicating with family

General Management

Interpretive Psychotherapy^[9]

To encourage the patient to describe their symptoms, to express emotions and to throw back on associated problems in their personal life. A history of patient's complaint is to be taken.

Supportive Psychotherapy^[9]

To provide the patient explanation regarding;

- Anatomical structure of the body
- Physiological functions
- Nature of anxiety and its symptoms

Behaviour Therapy^[9]

To advice the patient for regular exercise to;

- Relax skeletal muscles
- Regulate breathing

Train for anxiety management

- For self-assurance^[9]
- It is done by providing counselling thus helping bring up one's confidence.
- Reducing anxiety by relaxation^[9]
- Relaxation techniques help cope with stress and promote long-term health. Such techniques include exercises such as meditation that helps to connect the mind and body.

Homoeopathy for Post-Covid Anxiety

Homoeopathy is a therapeutic system based on treatment with similar remedies that functions rationally with its individualistic approach. The system has a wide range of remedies for every ailment. In Homoeopathy, the remedies act upon multiple planes and corrects the disharmony in the body, be it mental or physical^[18]. Few commonly indicated Homoeopathic remedies that have proved helpful in treating Post Covid Anxiety are listed below:

Aconitum Napellus

Great agitation and tossing of the body with anguish, inconsolable irritability, cries, tears, groans, complaints and reproaches. Great inconsolable anxiety; anxiety respecting one's malady and despair of a cure^[14]. Concerned about her recovery. Fear of death during pregnancy or confinement ^[15]. Patient feels violence of his sickness and is under great nervous irritation and excitement^[16]. Great fear, anxiety and worry accompany every ailment, however trivial^[17].

Argentum Nitricum

Mental anxiety; very impulsive; profound melancholy; imagines if left alone will die ^[14]. They become angry very easily, because they had to endure stitching pains in chest and cough for many days^[15]. Sadness, melancholy and confusion^[16]. Apprehensive of serious disease ^[17].

Arsenicum Album

Anger with anxiety, restlessness and sensation of coldness; hypochondriacal humor with restlessness and anxiety ^[14]. Anxiety and restlessness with pains, Great fear. Anxiety with constriction of chest and dyspnoea^[15]. Anxiety with fear, impulses, suicidal

inclinations, sudden freaks and mania^[16]. Despair drives him from place to place^[17].

Calcarea Carbonica

Despair in consequence of the impaired condition of the health; or hypochondriacal humor, with fear of being ill or unfortunate, of being infected by contagious diseases^[14]. Apprehension about present and future. Great anxiety, restlessness and palpitation ^[15]^[16]. Fears contagious diseases ^[17].

Gelsemium Sempervirens

Dread of being alone; afraid of what may happen; think they may lose self control^[14]. Great lack of courage. Bad effects from suddenly hearing bad news; from fright^[15]. Overwhelmed by surprise and becomes faint, weak, exhausted, becomes tired in all the limbs and unable to resist opposing circumstances. Palpitation of heart,^[16] emotional, excitement and fear lead to physical ailments^[17].

Ignatia Amara

Anguish especially in the morning on waking or at night, sometimes with palpitation of the heart. Despair of being cured^[14]. Sighs and sobs, will not be comforted. Anxiety as though something terrible had happened; cannot speak because of it^[15]. Suffers from grief of losing a loved one; has headaches, trembles, excited, weeps, sleepless, unable to control themselves ^[16]. Changeable mood ^[17].

Medorrhinum

Wild and desperate feeling, as of incipient insanity^[14,15,16]. Cannot speak without crying^[14,15,16]. Irritated about little things^[15]. Fear of the dark^[16]. Hopeless of recovery^[17].

Psorinum

Anxiety when riding in a car; with trembling of hands and restlessness ^[14]. Great fear of death; anxiety about heart and dyspnea, with attacks of pain in the chest^[15]. Despair of recovery, thinks he will die^[15,16,17].

Pulsatilla Pratensis

Melancholy with sadness, tears, great uneasiness of one's health; fear of death; as if death were near^[14]. Anxiety; thinks of dying^[15]. After slight emotions, difficult breathing^[15], tearful, sad, despondent; better by open air^[16], highly emotional^[17].

Stramonium

In some kinds of fever, where the patients cannot bear solitude of darkness, when they are alone or are in a dark room, the mental affections are prominent ^[14]. Mental derangement with spasmodic symptoms, stares, attempts to escape, with fever heat ^[15]. Attacks of mania in paroxysms appearing with more or less suddenness ^[16]. Cannot bear solitude or darkness, must have light and company^[17].

CONCLUSION

The Covid pandemic left no aspect of human life without affecting it negatively. The social impact of the pandemic is deeper than most people think. This time of crisis has generated stress in the population. It is completely normal to feel anxious occasionally, however people with anxiety disorders feel fear and worry constantly. These feelings of distress can severely impact their day to day lives when the feeling of anxiety becomes constant and overwhelming. Living with an anxiety disorder can be damaging, but with proper treatment, it can be managed. Anxiety is highly treatable by adequate therapeutic management and lifestyle changes. While Homoeopathy can be helpful in case of mild anxiety and stress, it should be considered a complementary treatment rather than main stream approach. Homeopathic remedies along with general management have been used for a long time for treating anxiety as it addresses the symptoms and its causation based on individuality of the patient. The treatment aims to majorly reduce the severity of anxiety attacks the patient has dealt with before by helping them adapt and bringing back into alignment in this current unprecedented global situation thus making the individual more resilient to stress.

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