

Topic: Panic disorder Phobias

Unit - 5

Paper - III

Class - B.A. II Psy. (Hons)

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Important points

- * Diagnostically, panic disorder is defined and characterized by the occurrence of panic attacks that often seem to come "out of the blue".
- * According to the DSM-5 criteria, the person must have experienced recurrent, unexpected attacks and must have been persistently concerned about having another attack or worried about the consequences of having an attack for at least a month.
- * In order to be a case of panic disorder, patient must be showing abrupt onset of at least 4 of 13 symptoms.
- * Following are 13 symptoms:
 1. Palpitations, pounding heart, or accelerated heart rate.
 2. Sweating.
 3. Trembling or shaking.

4. Sensations of shortness of breath or smothering.

5. Feelings of choking.

6. Chest pain or discomfort.

7. Nausea or abdominal distress

8. Feeling dizzy, unsteady, light headed, or faint.

9. Chills or heat sensations

10. Paresthesias (numbness or tingling sensations)

11. Derealization (feelings of unreality) or depersonalization (being detached from oneself)

12. Fear of losing control or "going crazy"

13. Fear of dying.

* Panic attacks are fairly brief but intense, with symptoms developing abruptly and usually reaching peak intensity within 10 minutes; the attacks usually subside in 20 to 30 minutes.

* Periods of anxiety, by contrast, do not usually have such an abrupt onset and are more long lasting.

* According to family and twin studies, panic (attacks) disorder has a moderate

heritable component. In a large twin study, it was estimated that 33 to 43% of the variance in liability to panic disorder was due to genetic factors.

- * Increased activity in the amygdala found to play central role in panic attacks. Amygdala is a collection of nuclei in front of the hippocampus in the limbic system of the brain that is critically involved in the emotion of fear.
- * Biochemical Abnormalities are also one of the causes of the panic disorder.
- * Comprehensive learning theory of panic disorder come under Psychological causal factors.
- * According to this theory, initial panic attacks become associated with initially neutral internal and external cues through an interoceptive conditioning (or exteroceptive conditioning) process.