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readers

Anxiety and Bipolar disorder

We get affected in different ways due to relationships, life events, family or financial problems, or job stress. Anxiety could be triggered due to these issues. If these issues are persistent, they could become intense feelings of anxiety, and as a result, it becomes difficult to look out for the major cause behind these complex feelings. These complex feelings might lead to depression, which can cause anxiety in a person. There is a need to sort through these feelings by acknowledging them. Due to episodes of depression, it is difficult to differentiate between anxiety and bipolar disorder. Most of the time, people find similarities between the symptoms associated with anxiety and bipolar disorder. The effective treatment options for the specific concern could only be found by learning the difference between anxiety and bipolar disorder. This paper aims to make peers and instructors aware of the differentiating symptoms between anxiety and bipolar disorder.

Explanation of the key topic

A mental condition associated with a person's change in energy and mood is known as bipolar disorder (Carvalho et al., 2020). People with bipolar disorder experience mood episodes in which they experience an intense state of emotions. Sudden and quick mood swings are much more common in peers with bipolar disorder. Such individuals' activity and energy levels are greatly affected by these mood shifts. Furthermore, these mood swings have also been seen to interfere with an individual's daily activities and life quality (Carvalho et al., 2020). Every so often, many individuals also experience anxiety in their daily life. Not being limited to specific events of life, these anxiety attacks might get worse with the passage of time, and as a result, they affect the individuals' ability to bring about activities of daily life. Thus, in bipolar disorder, an individual experiences episodes of mood swings while, on the other hand, anxiety is an ongoing process (McIntyre et al., 2006).

Anxiety and bipolar disorder share similar symptoms such as difficulty concentrating, restlessness, agitation, racing thoughts, and trouble sleeping. Due to alike symptoms, it is difficult to differentiate the concerning condition. In order to get knowledge about the prevailing condition, it is important to have a good understanding of both the terms, i.e., bipolar disorder and anxiety. In a bipolar condition, an individual experiences instability in activity levels, energy, and mood. Psychosis, depression, and mania episodes are common forms of mood changes (Carvalho et al., 2020). According to Phillips (2020), it was estimated by the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) that in the United States of America, almost 2.3 million people have bipolar disorder (Phillips, 2020). The researchers have found that an individual with bipolar having episodes of mania becomes more active and energetic than natural. Some of the symptoms they might experience are psychomotor agitation, restlessness, distracted, racing thoughts, getting refreshed only by getting a few hours of sleep, and extremely high impulsivity. On the other hand, a person becomes more withdrawn during episodes of depression, resulting in symptoms like suicidal intentions and thoughts, loss of interest in any activity, trouble staying awaked, high feelings of hopelessness, and fatigue (Carvalho et al., 2020).

Anxiety is much common in our society at present. In the presence of stress, our body reacts naturally, which is referred to as anxiety. Anxiety is an ongoing process that does not interfere with the daily activities of individuals. If this anxiety persists for long, it becomes a debilitating anxiety disorder. In their article, Campbell-Sills & Brown (2020) stated that the National Institute of Mental Health estimated that in the United States of America, almost 5.7% of adults experience anxiety once in their lives. This anxiety makes an individual conscious and anxious about different things on several occasions. The most common symptoms associated

with anxiety are shoulder and neck muscle tension, baffling body aches, headaches, and stomachs, startled easily, insomnia, and restlessness.

The connection between anxiety and bipolar disorder

Anxiety is mostly associated with other mental health conditions such as substance use disorder, bipolar disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), and depression. Some coexisting mental health conditions are always associated with people with bipolar disorder. A survey conducted in 2011 showed that anxiety is the most common mental health condition associated with bipolar disorder (Merikangas et al., 2011). Further, it also stated that in the general population, the rate of anxiety is 3 to 7 times lower as compared to individuals with bipolar disorder. Thus, an individual with bipolar disorder will experience anxiety during their lives.

Comparison Between Anxiety and Bipolar Disorder

There are the following symptoms that differentiate anxiety from bipolar disorder:

Sleeping schedules: A bipolar person is not affected by little or no sleep, whereas an individual experiencing anxiety and getting few hours of sleep gets irritated easily (McIntyre et al., 2006).

Social interactions: People with bipolar disorder have high self-esteem that makes them feel confident about themselves, and they find it easy to interact with people (McIntyre et al., 2006). At the same time, people suffering from anxiety are usually fearful of people and situations due to their low self-esteem. They do not value themselves and feel unwanted by others.

Behavioral patterns: A bipolar person experiences extreme ends of behaviors; at times, they feel stress-free and overwhelmingly happy, while during their low time, they feel extremely

depressed (McIntyre et al., 2006). Individuals with anxiety have constant fears prevailing in their minds, and they feel strained all the time.

Similarities between anxiety and bipolar disorder

Many symptoms associate anxiety with bipolar disorder, and because of it, it is not easy to differentiate between these two, and it also creates problems in the diagnosis of both. The symptoms might become more worse with the concurrence of anxiety with bipolar disorder. The experts have suggested the following impacts due to the occurrence of both conditions simultaneously:

- Experience of decline in quality and functioning of life
- Difficulty in showing adherence to a specific plan of treatment and showing no to poor response to treatment thus calls for an excessive need for healthcare
- Experience of excessive distress related to psychology
- Despite having medications, there is an occurrence of negative events
- Experiencing an increased substance use disorder and suicidal thoughts
- Enduring untreated illness for a longer period of time
- Experiencing increased severity and frequency of mood swings and results in an excessive rate of rapid cycling
- Increased episodes of mixed moods showing symptoms of both anxiety and bipolar disorder simultaneously

Challenges Associated with Combined Symptoms of Anxiety and Bipolar Disorder

The functioning and quality of life of an individual are negatively impacted by the combined occurrence of anxiety and bipolar disorder symptoms. People suffering from the symptoms of both these conditions have to bear severe consequences (Finan & Smith, 2013).

They experience an increased chance of suicidal behaviors and thoughts, increased substance misuse, and insomnia triggering manic episodes.

Treatments for the Symptoms of Anxiety and Bipolar Disorder

The individual treatment of bipolar disorder and anxiety is quite difficult to treat, and it is even more thought-provoking to treat the symptoms of both disorders simultaneously. The mental healthcare provider and primary care physician work together to provide effective treatment of these conditions. The following combinations are used to treat anxiety and bipolar disorder: Couples therapy, individual psychotherapy, and medications.

The first treatment used by the healthcare provider to treat the combined symptoms of anxiety and bipolar disorder is the use of medications. Initially, bipolar disorders are addressed by doctors by prescribing mood stabilizers. The major part of the treatment of anxiety is the medications. These medications might include selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs), such as sertraline (Zoloft) and fluoxetine (Prozac, Sarafem). However, manic symptoms might get worse by these medications (Campbell-Sills & Brown, 2020). The healthcare provider then lookout for any symptoms that cause a problem. Another medication used to treat the symptoms of disorders related to anxiety is benzodiazepines. These medications do not worsen the symptoms associated with bipolar disorder. On the other hand, a risk of a person for substance misuse is increased due to intolerance and physical dependence. The above medication is used for a short duration only.

One of the best treatments to treat anxiety is therapy and the usage of mood-stabilizing medicines. Therapy is the substitute for antidepressants, which are the major cause of negative impact on human health. Some of the therapies used to treat combined symptoms of anxiety and bipolar disorder are:

Interpersonal and social rhythm therapy: This therapy involves record-keeping and scheduling, thus enabling a person to maintain balance and avoid the negative impacts of combined symptoms of bipolar disorder and anxiety.

Relaxation techniques: As the name suggests, this technique uses relaxing activities that help an individual overcome the stress created due to bipolar disorder and anxiety.

Family therapy: The stress level within a family might be reduced by using this therapy as it provides ways to cope with the stress associated with anxiety and bipolar disorder.

Cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT): Being a short-term psychotherapy form, it is focused on diminishing anxiety by paying close attention to changing individuals' behavior.

Ways to Overcome Combined Symptoms of Anxiety and Bipolar Disorder

The life of a person with bipolar disorder becomes difficult, and it becomes more difficult if it gets associated with anxiety. Despite being disorders persisting lifetime, both conditions are curable and increase an individual's quality of life. After properly diagnosing these conditions, it is necessary to keep up a regular follow-up routine with the healthcare provider. In case of any unusual symptoms, contact your healthcare provider immediately. Try to live a quality life by avoiding things that bring stress to you.

CONCLUSION

Anxiety and bipolar disorder are mental health conditions that mostly occur simultaneously and are difficult to recognize. Bipolar disorder is a lifelong mental health condition in which a person experiences severe mood swings that negatively affect an individual's quality of life. At the same time, anxiety occurs due to certain prevailing conditions around an individual. Anxiety does not last long; If it does so, it takes the shape of anxiety disorder. Mostly bipolar disorder is associated with anxiety; thus, it becomes difficult to

diagnose a certain condition. Also, the bipolar disorder associated with anxiety is quite difficult to treat. For this purpose, there is a need to understand both conditions' symptoms thoroughly. A person with bipolar disorder is quite active in society but has severe episodes of moods that make him extremely happy and sad at another point. However, a person suffering from anxiety has low self-esteem and finds it difficult to stand in society. The symptoms of bipolar become difficult to treat in the presence of anxiety, and this leads to suicidal thoughts and intentions. But these mental health conditions could be treated at present by providing individuals with psychotherapy, a changed lifestyle, and the right drugs combination. With proper care, it is a possibility that people recover from these disorders completely.



College Essays

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