Agoraphobia

Agoraphobia is defined as an irrational fear of a range of situations in which a person believes escape or access to help may be very difficult or embarrassing. Women are twice as likely to develop agoraphobia than men with the majority of cases being diagnosed in patients under 35 years. In order to be diagnosed with agoraphobia, the patient must experience intense fear, anxiety, or panic attacks in at least 2 of the following situations: using public transportation, being in open spaces, being in enclosed spaces, standing in a crowd of people, being unaccompanied outside the home. These symptoms must last for more than 6 months. Panic disorder is often seen in these patients as well. Treatment for agoraphobia includes cognitive behavioral therapy and/or pharmacotherapy with SSRIs.



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Characteristics

Fear of Anticipating ? 2 Situations
Fearful-guy with 2 tutu-wearing Ladies
Agoraphobia is defined by irrational fear while facing or anticipating two or more situations. Patients can have a crippling fear of crowded spaces, closed spaces, or public transport. This condition can be so debilitating that patients might refuse to leave their homes.

Symptoms > 6 Months
Greater-than Sign with (6) Sax and Month Moon
According to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of of Mental Disorders (DSM), symptoms must last more than 6 months.

Associations

Panic Disorder
Panic button
Agoraphobia is typically seen in patients with comorbid panic disorder. Panic disorder is an anxiety disorder characterized by recurring panic attacks, which are associated with fear of the attacks and behavioral modifications to avoid these episodes. Panic attacks are characterized by intense fear that may include palpitations, shaking, shortness of breath, and a feeling that something terrible is going to happen.

Treatment

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
Cog Behavioral Therapist
Cognitive behavioral therapy is the first-line therapy for agoraphobia. Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) is a type of psychotherapy based on analyzing and reforming maladaptive thoughts that are contributing to emotional and behavioral distress.

Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors (SSRI)
Selective Silver-tonic Reuptake tube with Inhibiting-Chains
Selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs) can be used for the treatment of agoraphobia. SSRIs are a class of drug which work by selectively inhibiting serotonin reuptake into presynaptic cells, increasing the neurotransmitter's availability in the synaptic cleft.

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