

PANIC DISORDER

The aim of study was to investigate the causes of panic disorder, its impact on human health and to determine the ways of its treatment and prevention.

Panic disorder is an anxiety disorder where you regularly have sudden attacks of panic or fear. Everyone experiences feelings of [anxiety](#) and panic at certain times. It's a natural response to stressful or dangerous situations. But for someone with panic disorder, feelings of anxiety, stress and panic occur regularly and at any time, often for no apparent reason. People with panic disorder have sudden and repeated attacks of fear that last for several minutes. Sometimes symptoms may last longer. [5, p. 475]

These are called panic attacks. Panics attacks are characterized by a fear of disaster or of losing control even when there is no real danger. A person may also have a strong physical reaction during a panic attack. It may feel like having a heart attack. Panic attacks may occur at any time, and many people with panic disorder worry about and dread possibility of having another attack. [6, p.3]

A person with panic attack may become discouraged and feel ashamed because he or she cannot carry out normal routines like going to the grocery store or driving. Having panic disorder can also interfere with school or work.

Panic disorder often begins in late teens or early adulthood. More women than men have panic disorders. But not everyone who experiences panic attacks will develop panic disorder. [4, p.123]

The causes of panic disorder are not clearly understood. Research has shown that panic disorder may be genetically linked. Panic disorder is also associated with significant transitions that occur in life. Leaving for college, getting married, or having your first child, the death of a loved one, divorce or job loss are all major life transitions that may create stress and lead to the development of panic disorder.

Although the causes of panic disorder are not clearly understood, information about the disease does indicate that certain groups are more likely to develop the disorder.

Common symptoms associated with a panic attack include:

- racing heartbeat or palpitations
- shortness of breath
- feeling like you are choking
- dizziness (vertigo)
- lightheadedness
- nausea or upset stomach
- sweating or chills
- shaking or trembling

- changes in mental state, including a feeling of derealization (feeling of unreality) or depersonalization (being detached from oneself)
- numbness or tingling in your hands or feet
- chest pain or tightness
- fear that you might die

Panic attacks can also be caused by medical conditions and other physical causes. If you're suffering from symptoms of panic, it's important to see a doctor to rule out the following possibilities:

1. Mitral valve prolapse, a minor cardiac problem that occurs when one of the heart's valves doesn't close correctly
2. Hyperthyroidism (overactive thyroid gland)
3. Hypoglycemia (low blood sugar)
4. Stimulant use (amphetamines, cocaine, caffeine)
5. Medication withdrawal

Treatment for panic disorder focuses on reducing or eliminating your symptoms. This is achieved through therapy with a qualified professional and in some cases, medication. Therapy typically involves cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT). This therapy teaches the patient to change his thoughts and actions so that he can understand the attacks and manage his fear. [1, p.97]

The most commonly prescribed medications for panic disorder are anti-anxiety medications and antidepressants. Anti-anxiety medications are powerful and many types of them begin working right away but they generally should not be taken for long periods.

Antidepressants are used to treat depression but they are also be helpful for panic disorder. It's important to know that although antidepressants can be safe and effective for many people, they may be risky for some , especially children, teens and young adults. [2]

Some type of medications called beta-blockers can help control some of the physical symptoms of panic disorder such as excessive sweating, a pounding heart or dizziness. Although beta blockers are not commonly prescribed, they may be helpful in certain situations that bring on a panic attack.

In addition to these treatments, there are a number of steps that you can take at home to reduce the symptoms. Examples include:

- maintaining a regular schedule
- exercising on a regular basis
- getting enough sleep
- avoiding the use of stimulants such as caffeine

Panic disorder is often a chronic (long-term) condition that can be difficult to treat.

Some people with this disorder do not respond well to treatment. Others may have periods when they have no symptoms and periods when their symptoms are quite intense. Most people with panic disorder will experience some symptom relief through treatment. [3]

There's no sure way to prevent panic attacks or panic disorder. However, these recommendations may help get treatment for panic attacks as soon as possible to help stop them from getting worse or becoming more frequent; stick with your treatment plan to help prevent relapses or worsening of panic attack symptoms; get regular physical activity, which may play a role in protecting against anxiety.

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