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**THE ROLE OF HOMEOPATHIC AND PSYCHOLOGICAL  
STRATEGIES FOR ANXIETY DISORDER TREATMENT**

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**Dr Swarupananda Sarkar\*<sup>1</sup>, Dr Deepak Tak<sup>2</sup>**

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<sup>1</sup>Professor, Department of Psychiatry, Swasthya Kalyan Homoeopathic Medical College and Research Centre, Jaipur Rajasthan, India.

<sup>2</sup>PG scholar, Department of Psychiatry, Swasthya Kalyan Homoeopathic Medical College and Research Centre, Jaipur Rajasthan, India.

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**\*Corresponding Author: Dr Swarupananda Sarkar**

Professor, Department of Psychiatry, Swasthya Kalyan Homoeopathic Medical College and Research Centre, Jaipur Rajasthan, India.

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**ABSTRACT**

Anxiety disorders, including generalized anxiety disorder, panic disorder, Separation Anxiety Disorder, social anxiety disorder, and specific phobias, are common mental health conditions that significantly impact daily functioning and quality of life. Homeopathy provides individualized treatment options, focusing on specific remedies that address various symptoms of anxiety. Additionally, psychological strategies such as Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (CBT), regular exercise, mindfulness practices, and robust support systems are essential for effective anxiety management. By understanding and combining these diverse therapeutic approaches, individuals can achieve better treatment outcomes and improved quality of life.

**INTRODUCTION**

Anxiety disorders are among the most common mental health conditions affecting millions worldwide. According to the DSM-5 (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition) and the ICD-11 (International Classification of Diseases, Eleventh Revision), anxiety disorders encompass a range of conditions, including generalized anxiety disorder (GAD), panic disorder, social anxiety disorder, Separation Anxiety Disorder, Substance/Medication-Induced Anxiety Disorder, Selective Mutism and specific phobias. These disorders are characterized by excessive fear, worry, and behavioral disturbances, significantly impacting daily functioning and quality of life.<sup>[1][2]</sup>

## Diagnostic Criteria for Anxiety Disorders

- **ICD-11 Criteria for Anxiety Disorders**<sup>[1]</sup>

- Excessive Anxiety or Worry

Persistent and excessive fear or worry about a range of events or activities, often involving anticipation of future problems.

- Physical Symptoms

Accompanied by symptoms such as restlessness, fatigue, difficulty concentrating, irritability, muscle tension, or sleep disturbance.

- Duration

Symptoms must persist for a significant period, typically at least 6 months.

- Impact on Functioning

Anxiety significantly interferes with daily activities, work, school, or social interactions.

- Specificity of Fear (in phobic disorders)

Fear is specific to certain objects or situations (e.g., animals, heights) and leads to avoidance behaviors or intense anxiety.

- **DSM-5 Criteria for Anxiety Disorders**<sup>[2]</sup>

- Excessive Anxiety or Worry

Excessive anxiety and worry about a number of events or activities, occurring more days than not for at least 6 months.

- Difficulty Controlling Anxiety

Difficulty controlling the worry, even when the individual recognizes that the concern is excessive or unreasonable.

- Physical Symptoms

Associated with symptoms such as restlessness, fatigue, difficulty concentrating, irritability, muscle tension, or sleep disturbance.

- Impact on Functioning

Anxiety causes significant distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning.

- Specificity of Fear (in specific phobia and social anxiety disorder)

Fear is specific to certain objects or situations (e.g., spiders, public speaking) and leads to avoidance behaviors or intense anxiety.

### **Recognizing Signs of Anxiety**

Common symptoms of anxiety disorders encompass a range of physical, emotional, and behavioral manifestations. Physically, individuals may experience an increased heart rate, sweating even without exertion, trembling or shaking, shortness of breath, chest pain, dizziness, gastrointestinal issues like nausea, and chronic muscle tension. Emotionally, anxiety can present as excessive worry that is difficult to control, intense fear or apprehension, restlessness, irritability over minor issues, and a pervasive sense of impending doom. Behaviorally, individuals with anxiety disorders may exhibit avoidance behaviors, engage in compulsive rituals to alleviate anxiety, procrastinate due to overwhelming feelings, display hypervigilance towards potential threats, and struggle with concentration difficulties during anxious episodes.<sup>[1][2]</sup>

### **Strategies for Managing Anxiety**

Managing anxiety involves a combination of lifestyle changes, therapeutic interventions, and, in some cases, medication. Effective coping strategies include:

- **Regular Exercise:** Physical activity reduces stress hormones and increases endorphins, improving mood.<sup>[3]</sup>
- **Mindfulness and Meditation:** Techniques that focus on the present moment can reduce anxiety and improve emotional regulation.<sup>[3]</sup>
- **Healthy Diet:** A balanced diet supports overall mental health [5].
- **Adequate Sleep:** Good sleep hygiene is crucial for managing anxiety<sup>[3]</sup>
- **Support Systems:** Connecting with friends, family, or support groups provides emotional support and reduces feelings of isolation.<sup>[3]</sup>
- **Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT):** A structured therapy that helps individuals identify and change negative thought patterns and behaviors.<sup>[4]</sup>

### **Prevalence and Impact of Anxiety Disorders**

Anxiety disorders are highly prevalent, with significant impacts on public health. Anxiety disorders affect approximately 264 million people worldwide.<sup>[5]</sup>

Women are more likely to be affected than men, and the prevalence is highest in the 30-44 age group.<sup>[5]</sup>

Risk factors include genetic predisposition, early life trauma, and chronic medical conditions.<sup>[5]</sup>

Anxiety disorders often co-occur with other mental health conditions, such as depression, and can lead to substantial social and economic burdens. [5]

### **Understanding the Mechanisms of Anxiety**

Anxiety can be understood as a response to perceived threats, both real and imagined. From an evolutionary perspective, anxiety has survival benefits, preparing the body to respond to danger through the "fight or flight" mechanism. [6]

Chronic anxiety results from an overactive amygdala, the brain region responsible for emotional processing, and dysregulation of neurotransmitters such as serotonin and norepinephrine. [6]

### **Cognitive-Behavioral Theory (CBT) and Anxiety Disorders**

An influential theory in understanding anxiety disorders is the Cognitive-Behavioral Theory (CBT). According to CBT, anxiety disorders arise from maladaptive thought patterns and behaviors that exacerbate feelings of fear and worry. [7]

These thought patterns often include cognitive distortions such as catastrophizing (expecting the worst), overgeneralization (drawing broad conclusions from isolated incidents), and selective attention to threat cues. [7]

Behavioral components involve avoidance behaviors that maintain or increase anxiety over time, creating a vicious cycle of fear and avoidance. [7]

### **Homoeopathic Remedies for Anxiety**

Homoeopathy, a holistic approach to medicine, utilizes specific rubrics to identify and treat anxiety. Some key rubrics include:

#### **Aconitum Napellus**<sup>[8]</sup>

- Indications: Sudden onset of anxiety, panic attacks, restlessness, fear of death.
- Case Study: A randomized controlled trial demonstrated significant improvements in anxiety symptoms among participants treated with Aconitum Napellus compared to a placebo group.

#### **Argentum Nitricum**<sup>[9]</sup>

- Indications: Anticipatory anxiety, fear of crowds, claustrophobia, impulsiveness.
- Clinical Evidence: A study published in *Complementary Therapies in Medicine* highlighted the effectiveness of Argentum Nitricum in reducing anticipatory anxiety in patients.

### **Gelsemium Sempervirens<sup>[10]</sup>**

- Indications: Performance anxiety, weakness, trembling, fear of losing control.
- Research Findings: A double-blind, placebo-controlled trial found Gelsemium to be effective in reducing anxiety symptoms in participants undergoing stressful situations.

### **Lycopodium Clavatum<sup>[11]</sup>**

- Indications: Anxiety about appearing in public, lack of self-confidence, digestive disturbances.
- Study Results: Evidence from a clinical trial showed significant reduction in anxiety levels in patients treated with Lycopodium Clavatum.

### **Kali Phosphoricum<sup>[12]</sup>**

- Indications: General nervousness, mental and physical exhaustion, depression.
- Clinical Trial: A study conducted on the effects of Kali Phosphoricum on anxiety and stress-related symptoms reported positive outcomes.

### **Homeopathic Approach for Anxiety Disorder<sup>[13]</sup>**

- Case Taking
  - Hahnemann's Principle: Detailed case taking is crucial (Aphorism 83-104).
  - Application: Engage in an in-depth consultation to gather details about the patient's lifestyle, stressors, family history, and personality traits. Pay special attention to:
    - Onset and duration of anxiety.
    - Situational factors (e.g., social situations, performance settings).
    - Physical symptoms (e.g., palpitations, sweating, trembling).
    - Emotional and mental state (e.g., fear of death, fear of losing control).
- Identification of Miasms
  - Hahnemann's Principle: Miasms are underlying chronic conditions affecting the individual (Aphorism 78-81).
  - Application: Identify any miasmatic influence (psora, syphilis, sycosis) that may contribute to the chronic nature of the anxiety disorder. This helps in selecting appropriate anti-miasmatic remedies.
- Remedy Selection
  - Hahnemann's Principle: The remedy must match the symptom totality (Aphorism 153).
  - Application: Based on the collected symptoms and miasmatic background, choose a remedy that closely aligns with the patient's unique presentation of anxiety. Common remedies include:

- Aconitum Napellus: Sudden panic, fear of death.
- Argentum Nitricum: Anticipatory anxiety, impulsiveness.
- Gelsemium Sempervirens: Performance anxiety, trembling.
- Lycopodium Clavatum: Lack of self-confidence, digestive disturbances.
- Kali Phosphoricum: General nervousness, exhaustion.
- Potency and Dosage
  - Hahnemann's Principle: Administer the minimum dose to stimulate healing (Aphorism 270-271).
  - Application: Start with a low potency (e.g., 6C or 30C) and observe the patient's response. Gradually adjust potency and frequency based on individual reactions and symptom changes.
- Follow-Up and Reassessment
  - Hahnemann's Principle: Regular follow-ups are essential to monitor progress and modify treatment (Aphorism 248-250).
  - Application: Schedule follow-up appointments to assess the effectiveness of the remedy, symptom changes, and overall improvement. Adjust the treatment plan as needed based on the patient's feedback and symptom evolution.
- Lifestyle and Supportive Measures
  - Hahnemann's Principle: Consider the patient's lifestyle and environmental factors (Aphorism 4).
  - Application: Advise on lifestyle modifications to reduce anxiety triggers. Encourage practices like regular exercise, adequate sleep, mindfulness, and avoiding stimulants like caffeine and alcohol.

## CONCLUSION

Anxiety disorders significantly impact daily life, requiring a comprehensive treatment approach. Homeopathy offers personalized remedies like Aconitum napellus and Arsenicum album, targeting specific anxiety symptoms effectively. Psychological strategies such as Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (CBT), mindfulness, exercise, and social support systems are essential in managing anxiety. CBT helps individuals identify and modify negative thought patterns and behaviors, promoting long-term resilience. Combining homeopathic and psychological approaches enhances treatment outcomes, addressing both emotional and physiological aspects of anxiety. Healthcare providers must understand the complexity of anxiety disorders to tailor effective treatment plans. By fostering awareness and offering

integrated therapies, individuals can achieve improved mental health and quality of life. Supporting individuals in managing anxiety empowers them to lead fulfilling lives despite the challenges of anxiety disorders.

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