PSYCHIATRY BRAIN HEALTH

Is there a cure for psychiatric disorders?

Like most non-communicable diseases, psychiatric disorders are controllable with the help of appropriate treatment. Treatment helps contain deterioration of the illness, reduces chance of recurrence in future and improves the quality of life. Treatment may lead to complete recovery for some patients. Most psychiatric disorders are recurrent by nature.

Why should one take treatment for psychiatric disorders?

The question should be rather why one should not take treatment! Just like any other physical illnesses like cancers, hypertension and diabetes mellitus, where one would immediately seek medical help, so should one afflicted by a psychiatric disorder. Lack of information, fears and misconceptions often prevent an individual from seeking timely help, which adversely affects one's well-being. Early and prompt treatment increases the chances of improvement and well-being.

Who can treat psychiatric disorders?

Any qualified modern medicine doctor can treat psychiatric disorders. Psychiatrists are medical doctors with speciality training in psychiatric disorders. The treatment comprises of medications and psychotherapy. The treatment duration for most psychiatric disorders is for couple of months or longer depending on the type, severity and duration of the disorder. Psychologist administer psychological tests and administer psychotherapy.

Do the medicines for treating psychiatric disorders have side effects?

Anything that we consume can potentially have side effects but not all side effects are dangerous. Medicines are prescribed after a detailed evaluation including a physical examination of the patient. For some side effects, body develops tolerance over time. For other side effects, it may require prescribing other medications. Routine monitoring of patient's health parameters to monitor the emergence of any side effect is advocated. It is important that treatment is continued under medical supervision only.

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BRAIN HEALTH

Our brain differentiates us from all other species in the animal kingdom. A truly remarkable structure, it defines who we are as individuals and how we experience the world. A healthy brain matters for our wellbeing, productivity, longevity and makes us ready to face challenges in life. At times, one could require help from a medical doctor in order to restore brain health. A psychiatrist is a medical doctor who deals with the brain disorders that affect our thinking, feeling and behaviour. At the same time, an individual has the possibility to keep their brain healthy. Please find hereafter some simple tips to keep your brain healthy.

TIPS TO KEEP YOUR BRAIN HEALTHY

Eat well: Most are taking care to eat food that is healthy for the heart. The good news is that the foods that are good for your heart are also good for your brain. Foods rich in omega-3 fatty acids like walnuts are beneficial. Eat a balanced diet and keep your body weight and waist size in healthy range.
Avoid consumption of alcohol and use of any other street drugs.

Sleep well: Even your vehicle gets rest when parked overnight, so must you! Sleeping is an active physiological activity that repairs and restores your body and brain in order to face the challenges of the new day. On an average, an individual adult should get eight hours of uninterrupted sleep at night. Avoid self-medicating with sleeping pills.

Move well: An active lifestyle goes a long way in keeping us healthy. When we perform active physical exercise, our muscles release certain chemicals that makes our brain and body feel good and keeps our immune system healthy. Daily brisk walk of as little as 20 minutes can help keep us fit and fine. Avoid head injuries and utilise helmets to protect your head.

PSYCHIATRIC DISORDERS

Psychiatry is a branch of medicine dealing with disorders of brain that affect the thought, feeling and behaviour of an individual. Brain is a complex organ made up of an average of 85-100 billion neurons (special brain cells) which interconnect with each other in trillion different ways (via the interconnecting junction between neurons called as a synapse). Our brain controls all the functions in the body including executive, cognitive and emotional functions (planning, organisation, thinking, analysis, judgment, logic, memory, impulse control, emotion generation, language, imagination and creativity). Any disorder in the brain can adversely affect any of these functions and can manifest as a psychiatric disorder. Psychiatric disorders are therefore no different from any other physical disorder occurring in other parts of the body. Like other physical illnesses, psychiatric disorders are treatable. Early and appropriate treatment can be helpful to regain productive and fulfilling life.

There exist more than 200 different psychiatric disorders. The common psychiatric disorders are Depressive disorders, Anxiety disorders, Bipolar mood disorders, Schizophrenia, Substance dependence, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism, Sexual dysfunctions, Eating disorders, Personality Disorders, Obsessive Compulsive Disorders (OCD), Neurocognitive Disorders (Dementias) and Sleep disorders. For details of these disorders, please visit www.rfhospital.org

FAQS

What is brain health and why is it important?

World Healthcare Organization (WHO) defines health as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. Mind is a product of brain functioning, hence brain health equals to mental health. Only a healthy body can have a healthy brain and vice versa. A healthy brain is a prerequisite for achieving success, tranquillity, and feeling of well-being. Please refer to the aforementioned tips on how to keep the brain healthy.

How to identify that one needs psychiatric help?

Most frequently, sleep, appetite, mood, thinking, behaviour and physical as well as mental energy or physical activity are disturbed in psychiatric disorders. If the disturbance in these domains occurs on most days of the week, persists for a month or longer and interferes with work life, personal care and / or social life, it is time for one to seek help from a psychiatrist.

Who can get psychiatric disorder?

As is true for most physical illnesses any individual is at risk of developing a psychiatric disorder. Some individuals are more prone by virtue of genetic vulnerability. Individuals who have any type of chronic (long-term) illnesses liked diabetes mellitus, cardiac disease, hypertension; high cholesterol levels, cancers, endocrine (hormone) problems, certain neurological illnesses, kidney (renal) diseases etc. are more vulnerable to develop psychiatric disorders. Use of alcohol, tobacco, consuming street drugs could be because of or can precipitate a psychiatric disorder.

Which age group is more likely to get psychiatric disorders?

All age groups are vulnerable to develop psychiatric disorders. Different psychiatric disorders start at different ages. ADHD, autism, learning disorder (LD), conduct disorder are more likely to be diagnosed in children while dementias are more likely in the elderly. Common psychiatric disorders like depressive disorders, anxiety disorders, schizophrenia, substance use disorder and bipolar mood disorders are more likely to start around adolescence and young adulthood.

What is the cause of psychiatric disorders?

There is no single cause for psychiatric disorders. Genetic vulnerability coupled with other triggering factors cause psychiatric disorders. There can be multiple triggering factors predisposing one to develop psychiatric disorders. Any factor (nutritional, metabolic, hormonal, environmental etc.) that adversely affects the functioning of brain can manifest as symptoms of psychiatric disorders.