

Prevalence and Etiology of Anxiety Disorders

Specific (Simple) Phobias

- ❖ Focus of anxiety typically changes through the developmental process
- ❖ About 5 percent of children/adolescents exhibit specific phobias
- ❖ More common in girls than boys

Social Phobia

- ❖ About 1 percent of children and adolescents experience social phobia
- ❖ Most frequently diagnosed after age 10
- ❖ Not clear if gender differences exist

Agoraphobia

- ❖ Rarely found and least investigated of all anxiety disorders found in children and adolescents

Panic Disorder

- ❖ Most commonly found in adolescents
- ❖ Occurs at a rate of .6 percent
- ❖ More common in females than males
- ❖ Some indication that Separation Anxiety Disorder can be a precursor for Panic Disorder

Generalized Anxiety Disorder

- ❖ Most common anxiety disorder found in adolescents occurring at the rate of 4 percent to 7 percent in children and adolescents
- ❖ Median age of onset is 10 years of age
- ❖ More common in females
- ❖ Symptoms more likely to continue into adulthood for females than males
- ❖ Most likely to be diagnosed with other anxiety disorders and depression

Separation Anxiety

- ❖ Separation anxiety primarily occurs in younger children at a rate of 5 percent
- ❖ Almost all children recover from separation anxiety but they are at higher risk for the development of other anxiety disorders and depression in adolescence and adulthood (particularly girls)
- ❖ School refusal occurs at a rate of approximately 4 percent in children and adolescents
- ❖ School refusal in children over the age of 10 is much more difficult to treat



Prevalence and Etiology of Anxiety Disorders (Continued)

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

- ❖ Development of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder appears to be related to four factors: degree of exposure; youngsters' characteristics (ethnicity, gender, and prior functioning); coping mechanisms; access to social support
- ❖ National Institute of Mental Health research suggests the following rates of PTSD: 2 percent following exposure to natural disaster; 28 percent following an exposure to terrorism (shooting event); and 29 percent following a plane crash
- ❖ Needs to be treated and monitored to avoid development of long-term symptoms of anxiety and depression

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder

- ❖ Rate of 1 percent to 2 percent in general population
- ❖ At younger ages boys outnumber girls, but by adolescence genders are equally represented
- ❖ Mean age of onset for boys is 9 years of age
- ❖ Mean age of onset for girls is 11 years of age
- ❖ Obsessions and compulsive behaviors typically relate to two broad themes: preoccupation with cleanliness, grooming, and averting danger; pervasive doubting of self
- ❖ Multiple obsessions occur simultaneously
- ❖ Research indicates that the disorder is likely to follow a chronic course



Etiology of Anxiety Disorders

- ❖ Genetic risks include: family history of anxiety disorders; tendency toward emotional reactivity and behavioral responsivity; and inhibited temperament
- ❖ OCD, in particular, appears to have a strong biological link
- ❖ Psychosocial risks include: exposure to traumatic event; information about traumatic event; parents who are extremely intrusive and overprotective; modeling of anxiety reactions; cognition of hostile environments; insecure or poor attachment