



Too Much Worry?

UNDERSTANDING ANXIETY DISORDERS



What are anxiety disorders?

Anxiety disorders include a wide range of disorders with excessive worry or fear as the main symptom, including phobic disorders, social phobia, generalised anxiety disorder, panic disorder and separation anxiety disorder.

Features of anxiety disorders include excessive worry and anticipation of impending danger. Apart from mental symptoms, there are physiological symptoms as well, such as increased heart rate and rapid breathing.

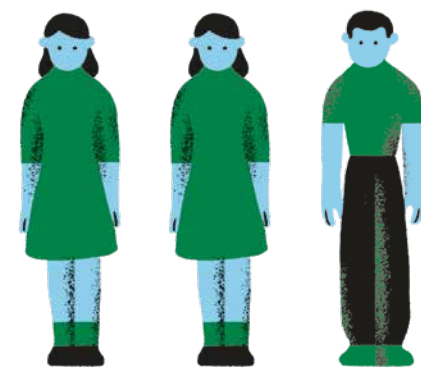
How common are anxiety disorders?



Among ethnic Chinese Hong Kong residents aged between 16 to 75:

The prevalence rate of generalised anxiety disorder is **4.2%**

The prevalence rate of other anxiety disorders is **1.5%**



The prevalence rate ratio of female to male is 2:1
Except social phobia which has equal gender ratio

What are the symptoms of anxiety disorders?

Main symptoms:



Cognitive and emotional

- Excessive worry
- Anticipation of impending danger that one has little chance to escape



Physiological

- Increased heart rate and rapid breathing
- Chest and gastrointestinal problems
- Muscle tension
- Dry mouth
- Sweating

Characteristics of common types of anxiety disorders:

Types	Characteristics
Generalised anxiety disorder	Excessive anxiety about various daily events
Specific phobias	Excessive fear of specific objects or scenarios, such as the fear of height, spiders, or seeing blood
Social phobia	Fear in social situations
Panic disorder	Experience "panic attacks" out of nowhere



If you are experiencing similar situations, please consult a doctor or clinical psychologist for professional assessments to receive the necessary help or treatment. Earlier treatment is better for recovery.

How to treat anxiety disorders?



A Medication

When serious anxiety or phobic symptoms occur, the patient may get prescriptions from the doctor. Both selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRI) and serotonin and noradrenaline reuptake inhibitors (SNRI) are effective in treating most anxiety disorders (except specific phobias).



B Psychological treatment

Cognitive behavioural therapy has been proved effective in treating most anxiety disorders, including specific phobias, social phobia, generalised anxiety disorder and panic disorder.

Anxiety disorders can be treated. If you think that you may be suffering from it, you should seek help.

Wishing to help the patient to recover? You may:



Be tolerant of the patient's symptoms



Help the patient to build a regular lifestyle



Listen to the patient more to show support



Observe the patient's mood changes

For more information:



Consult your doctor



Call and consult these departments:
Hospital Authority Mental Health Direct
2466 7350
Social Welfare Departmental Hotline
2343 2255



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精神健康諮詢委員會
Advisory Committee on Mental Health



Department of Health