Disorders of Body Preoccupation
Psychology 311
Abnormal Psychology

Overview
- Generally are body complaints that appear to be related to psychological makeup and stress
- Have no specific medical diagnosis
- Note: Just because there is no organic basis for the problem does not mean the person is not suffering

Many Disorders
- Somatoform Disorders
- Pain Disorders
- Somatization Disorders
- Conversion Disorders
- Hypochondriasis Disorders
- Body Dysmorphic Disorders (BDD)
- Factitious Disorders
- Others

Somatoform Disorders
- Physicians are asked to treat a physical condition but no physical cause is found.

Pain
- Acute pain
  - Up to 6 months duration
- Chronic pain
  - Greater than 6 months duration
- Can be difficult to assess
  - Generalized pain very difficult
    - Especially back pain

Patient Coping Strategies
- Ignore the pain
- Distract person from the pain
- Increase positive self-statements
- Catastrophizing one's pain
- Hoping for relief
- Praying for relief
Other Self Strategies

- Drugs
  - Alcohol
    - Drink wine to help dull the pain
    - I cannot sleep without my ___ glasses of Scotch
  - Marijuana
  - Oxycotin

Problem

- Is temporary
- Causes other problems
- Develop Tolerance

Other Treatments

- Medical
  - Surgery
  - Drugs
    - Same issues
    - What happens when you stop
  - Patients do not follow other directions
    - Stretching
    - Rest
    - Non use

Exercise

- Helps to decrease inflammation associated with pain
- Strengthens opposing muscles and ligaments
  - Takes pressure off pain pressure points
- Strengthens muscle groups associated with pain
  - Reduces the pain
  - Sometimes does not work to decrease pain

Psychological Treatments

- Operant Models
  - Identify the triggers that cause the pain
    - Then reinforce alternative behaviors
    - Extinguish (ignore) pain associated behaviors
- Cognitive/Behavioral Models
  - Identify learned responses
  - Educate the person in pain
  - Adjust attitudes toward pain
  - Alter the environment

Biofeedback

- Providing feedback about the area in pain can result in pain reduction
- Use some monitoring device that provides some signal (sound).
- When pain is reduced, the signal decreases
- Patient tries to decrease the signal as much as they can
- Result, get reductions in pain.
Environment

- Can provide many triggers about pain
- Alter the environment, can reduce pain
- Example
  - Altering the patient environment in a hospital
  - Developed a room where there were lots of plants, waterfall, soothing music
  - Result, patients reported less pain during their stay
  - Can be done at home as well

Conclusions

- Many options
- May need to try several options to fine ones that work
- Sometimes, nothing works
  - If not trauma caused, may need to look at other psychological issues

Somatization Disorders

- Marked by multiple somatic complaints that reoccur
- Are chronic

Briquet’s Syndrome

- Symptoms may Include
  - Headaches, fatigue, heart pains, vomiting, bowel problems, menstrual problems, sexual problems, fainting, allergies, others
  - Are mostly women
  - Person goes from Physician to Physician
  - May undergo unneeded surgeries
  - Take large quantities of medications
  - Issue: Person actually believes they are sick.

Other Symptoms

- Are self-centered
- May experience anxiety or depression
  - May attempt suicide
- Generally are preoccupied with their symptoms.

Conversion Disorders

- Experience the loss of function for some body part
- May include
  - Deafness,
  - Paralysis
  - Blindness
  - Difficulty walking
  - Stomach Pain and spasms
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Associated Issues

- Usually has a sudden onset and is associated with a stressor.
- Allow you to escape from life challenges by incapacitation
- Is a negative reinforcement paradigm

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Hypochondriasis

- Individuals believe they have a medical problem lasting for 6 months with no medical reassurance
- Individuals have an obsessive concern with body organs
- Fear disease
- Often exaggerate symptoms
- Monitor body symptoms closely

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Treatment of Hypochondriasis

- Rapport
- Education about symptoms and diseases
- Carefully challenge

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Bodily Dysmorphic Disorders (BDD)

- Is an imagined defect or morbid concern about a minor unwanted physical feature.
- Individuals experience marked distress
- Treatment
  - Cognitive/Behavioral
  - Pinpoint dysfunction perceptions

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Factitious Disorders

- It a total fabrication or exaggeration of a disorder
- Individuals often have a history of uncontrollable lying
- Individuals seek attention any way they can get it.
- Example
  - Munchausen Syndrome

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Symptoms

- Simulate disease for getting medical attention.
- May travel far to a new hospital
- Have incredible tales of medical history
- May fake symptoms
  - Blood in urine
  - May self inflict real injuries
Factitious Disorder by Proxy

- Here a parent self inflicts injury to their child so they can get attention.
- May occur with pets as well.

Malingering

- Here seek hospitalization for a reason
  - Monetary or non-monetary compensation
  - Avoid police or prison
  - Disability pensions
  - Others
  - Sometimes is difficult to diagnose

Conclusions

- Many disorders
- Have a multitude of symptoms
- May begin with a physical cause, then move into a psychological disorder.
- Some are hard to treat.