

## BEYOND THE SURFACE: AN IN-DEPTH ANALYSIS OF MENTAL HEALTH DISORDERS

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### *Abstract*

An individual's psychological, emotional, and social well-being is comprised in behavioral health, which is often referred to as mental health. Which changes an individual's thoughts, emotions, actions, as well as social connections. A clinically significant disruption in an individual's behavior, management of emotions, or thought processes is an indicative of a mental ailments. Generally, it is connected to discomfort or impairment in critical domains of functioning. A wide range of obstacles are included in mental health related problems, including anxiety disorders, psychotic disorders, depression, bipolar disorder, and other mood disorders. Mental health illnesses, which are sometimes masked in stigma and ambiguity, include a wide and constantly changing spectrum of human experience. This review began with an examination of their prevalence, categorization, stigma, diagnosis, course of therapy, and the difficulties people encounter in the healthcare system. Though these conditions are challenging, plenty of progress has been made in understanding and treating those conditions. Early detection and intervention are becoming progressively important, and diagnostic standards, evaluation instruments, and treatment modalities have changed throughout time. Furthermore, programs like Mental Health Awareness Month and global awareness campaigns aimed at eliminating the stigma associated with mental health are progressively changing how society perceives and deals with these illnesses.

### *Keywords:*

Anxiety, Mood Disorders, Mental health, Psychotic disorders, Psychotherapy, Psychosurgery.

## Introduction

An individual's psychological, emotional, and social well-being is integrated in behavioral wellbeing which is generally referred as 'mental health' which is responsible to influence a person's thinking, feelings, actions, and interactions with other people. A clinically significant weakening in a person's intellect, emotional control, or behavior indicates a mental condition. In general, it is linked to distress or functional impairment in key areas. Mental maladies come in many different shapes; and possibly will also be stated as mental health conditions. The latter is a more general phrase that encompasses mental illnesses, psychosocial impairments, and other mental states connected to considerable suffering, functional disability, or danger of harming oneself. <sup>(1, 2)</sup>

Mental health disorders, often described as hidden battles, as it constitutes a complex and pervasive facet of human well-being. Mental health conditions have burgeoned into a global health concern of significant proportions. These circumstances affect a substantial section of the global population, transcending geographical, cultural, as well as socioeconomic restrictions. According to recent statistical update, up to 2019, nearly 970 million human beings, or 1 in every 8 residents around the world were occupying with a mental disorder. However, in 2017, India had 197.3 million individuals surviving with problems with their mental health. Moreover, 1 among every 7 people in India had a mental disorder. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), depression is predicted to become the leading cause of disease burden globally by 2030. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has undeniably accelerated this trajectory, resulting in a surge in mental health issues. <sup>(1, 3)</sup>

Mental health disorders encompass a diverse array of challenges, ranging from mood disorders such as depression or bipolar disorder to anxiety related disorders, psychotic disorders, and many more. These circumstances remain inscrutable to many, often masked beneath the surface of our daily life, and remain hidden from view. The stigma surrounding this issue has contributed to this concealment, making it difficult for individuals to openly discuss their struggles and seek help. However, the consequences of untreated mental health disorders are profound which affects not only the people who battle them but also their families, society along with their workplaces at large, in terms of productivity, healthcare costs, and overall quality of life. Mental health disorders can't be discriminated against on the basis of socioeconomic status or cultural background, but they are influenced by these factors. Economic disparities can worsen the jeopardy of developing these disorders, as individuals facing financial hardship often encounter stressors that can trigger or worsen these conditions. Furthermore, cultural attitudes and beliefs regarding mental health can significantly impact the way individuals perceive and seek help for these conditions. <sup>(4, 5, 6)</sup>

The consequences of untouched mental health disorders extend far beyond the individual. In the workplace, mental health issues can lead to reduced productivity, absenteeism, and increased healthcare costs. Furthermore, untreated conditions can strain personal relationships, lead to substance abuse, and, in extreme cases, these conditions possibly result in acts of self-harm or suicide. The impact of society is equally significant for this concern. Mental health disorder is a common factor in homelessness, incarceration, along with other forms of social marginalization. Thus, addressing mental health disorders at the societal level is not only a matter of compassion but also one of economic and social responsibility. Despite the complex nature of these concerns, significant progress has been made in understanding as well as addressing these issues. Diagnostic criteria, assessment tools, and treatment approaches have evolved, and there is a growing emphasis on early detection and intervention. Moreover, efforts to reduce the stigma surrounding mental health are gradually transforming the way society views and addresses these conditions.

## Classification and Types of Mental Health Disorders

Mental health disorders hold a vast spectrum of conditions, and each characterized by its unique set of symptoms, underlying causes, along with its treatment approaches. Understanding the various categories and types of mental health disorders is an essential part for developing effective interventions or support systems.

### A. Mood Disorders

Mood disorders are among the most prevalent mental health conditions and are distinguished by disturbances in a person's emotional condition. They are probably triggered by discrimination of brain chemicals. Turbulence in an individual's life due to stressful incidents can be the probable justification for a depressed mood. Key types of mood disorders include Major Depressive Disorder along with bipolar disorder.

- i. Major Depressive Disorder (MDD): MDD, often referred to as clinical depression, which is denoted by persistent feelings of sadness, hopelessness, and a lack of interest or pleasure in most activities. It may occur only once in a life, or rarely some suffer multiple episodes of this condition. Just like adults, it also occurs in children and adolescents, characterised by sadness, irritability, feeling negative and worthless, anger, physical aches, feeling misunderstood and in some rare cases it associated with sensitive, alcohol or substance abuse, eating or sleeping glitches, self-harm, loss of interest in regular activities, and avoidance of social interaction and many more. It is predominantly caused due to biological characteristics, brain chemistry, and hormonal changes along with these inherited traits can be the reason. <sup>(7)</sup>
- ii. Bipolar Disorder: This condition involves extreme mood changes along with episodes of intense elation or mania as well as severe depressive disorders. It is classified into two groups as bipolar I and bipolar II disorders on the basis of severity of manic episodes. Individuals may sense a huge amount of activity and energy during a such episodes, which can be experienced for long time or short time; moreover, some may have psychotic symptoms such as hallucinations or delusions. In rare cases, persons may need hospitalization. There are chances of recurrence of such conditions after the successful treatment. <sup>(8)</sup>

### B. Anxiety Disorders

Anxiety disorders are characterized by excessive and often irrational worry or fear and are directly caused due to physical health problems.

- i. Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD): This involves chronic and excessive worrying about various aspects of regular lifestyles, habitually occurs with physical symptoms like restlessness, muscle tension overthinking, perceiving situations, inability to relax, feeling restless, trouble in sleeping, sweating, irritability. Investigators investigated conditions that occur in person worrying on most days and at least for half of the year. Causes for GAD can be related to genetics, personality, or changes in brain chemistry or functioning. GAD mainly occurs along with other mental health disorders like phobias, depression, suicidal thoughts, as well as substance abuse. <sup>(9)</sup>
- ii. Panic Disorder: This disorder is marked by recurrent, sudden onset of feeling fear or panic attacks, accompanied by intense physical and psychological symptoms. Panic attacks may be due to phobias, trauma, and stress-related disorders that usually happen without warning and generally last for 5 to 20 minutes. During a panic attack person may suffer from excess sweating, and breathing problems and also may feel like his/her heart is racing, chest pain, Tingling or numbness in your fingers or toes. <sup>(10)</sup>

### C. Psychotic Disorders

Psychotic disorders mostly involve a disconnection from reality and may include a condition called Schizophrenia which is a severe, chronic mental illness characterized by hallucinations, delusions, disorganized thinking, and impaired social and occupational functioning. This disorder is generally developed by a combination of factors such as environmental factors, brain chemistry, and genetics, some pregnancy or birth complications like malnutrition, or exposure to toxins or viruses. The use of psychoactive or psychotropic drugs is also the reason to cause psychotic disorders. <sup>(11)</sup>

### D. Eating Disorders

Eating disorders revolve around dysfunctional eating habits, body image concerns, and an unhealthy obsession with weight and food. If not treated essentially, eating disorders can become long-term troubles and, in some cases, can be the motive for fatality. The most common eating disorders are anorexia and bulimia nervosa.

- i. Anorexia Nervosa: Anorexia involves extreme restriction of food intake, leading to dangerously low body weight. It is mainly associated with the fear of weight gain, the person with anorexia severely restricts the amount of food and controls calories by vomiting after eating or exercising excessively. However, some genetic tendencies toward perfectionism, sensitivity, and perseverance; obsessive-compulsive personality traits; and modern western cultures emphasize thinness are also the reasons for anorexia. Anorexia can cause arrhythmias or an imbalance of electrolytes or minerals that conserve the equilibrium of fluids in the body as well as essential components for regular bodybuilding making the human body weak and causing many physical illnesses. <sup>(12)</sup>

- ii. **Bulimia Nervosa:** Bulimia is marked by cycles of binge-eating followed by compensatory behaviors like purging or excessive exercise. Females are more prone to have disease than males, and it probably begins in the late teens or early adults. The cause of bulimia is not exactly known but it may be due to genetics, biological or emotional factors, along with psychological and some other issues. It may cause various serious complications like heart and kidney diseases, Absent or irregular periods in females, digestive problems, low confidence due to being overweight leading to self-injury, and suicidal thoughts. <sup>(13)</sup>

#### **E. Trauma-Related Disorders:**

Trauma-related disorders mainly result from childhood traumatic and stressful experiences and encompass disorders related to a group of behavioral and emotional problems. Trauma is an emotional comeback to an awful event like an accident, rape, or any natural as well as human-caused disaster. Trauma can affect anyone but the populations at high risk include children, military personnel and their families, LGBTQ individuals, and those under economic stress. This can be classified as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), reactive attachment disorder (RAD), and disinhibited social engagement disorder (DSED). These disorders develop after exposure to a traumatic event and lead to intrusive memories, flashbacks, and heightened anxiety, typically occur in response to prolonged, severe trauma, such as childhood abuse, and can manifest with a broader range of symptoms. <sup>(14)</sup>

#### **Diagnosis and Assessment:**

The accurate diagnosis and assessment of mental health disorders are pivotal steps in the journey toward effective treatment and support. A mental health diagnosis typically begins with a clinical evaluation conducted by a mental health professional. This evaluation may include in-depth interviews, observation of behavior, and discussions of symptoms and personal as well as medical history along with this it also includes some laboratory evaluations for alcohol and drug abuse, and hormonal imbalance. Mental health disorders are diagnosed based on specific criteria outlined in diagnostic manuals, such as the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5) or the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-10). This assessment assigns physicians a portrait of the way patients thinks, feel, reason, and remember. The mental health examination judges an individual's emotional well-being through a succession of inquiries and also includes a physical inspection. These criteria help clinicians identify and classify disorders. <sup>(15)</sup>

Many individuals with mental health disorders experience comorbidity, meaning they have multiple disorders simultaneously. For example, an individual with schizophrenia may also experience MDD, panic, and generalized or social anxiety. Psychiatric comorbidities are also associated with epilepsy it may be possible that patients get treated with epilepsy and a significant fraction of patients with psychiatric comorbidities persist undiagnosed and untreated. Individuals with substance use disorder are at distinct jeopardy for acquiring one or more primary or chronic conditions. This can complicate diagnosis, as symptoms may overlap or interact. A lack of awareness due to which patients do not seeking help from a psychiatrist, some individuals deny or hide their symptoms, and some do not adhere to treatment. Physicians are worried about liberally talking with individuals with suicidal behavior, making diagnosis more complicated. <sup>(16, 17)</sup>

Employment of a proper assessment tool for mental disorders is a necessity to enhance understanding of the severity of illness and the convenience of top treatment. Various psychological tests and assessment tools are used to measure specific symptoms and traits. For example, the Beck Depression Inventory assesses the severity of depressive symptoms. In psychiatry, neuroimaging also facilitates the diagnosis of psychiatric disorders and the development of new medications. It is used to detect structural lesions causing psychosis and to differentiate depression from neurodegenerative disorders. Techniques like MRI and PET scans can reveal structural and functional brain abnormalities associated with some mental health disorders, aiding in diagnosis. Genetic markers such as catechol-O-methyltransferase, Brain-derived neurotrophic factor (BDNF), catechol-O-methyltransferase, and serotonin transporter (5-HTT) genes have been identified for some disorders, such as bipolar disorder and schizophrenia. Genetic testing can help with diagnosis and treatment planning. <sup>(18, 19, 20)</sup>

Apart from these, early detection of mental health disorders is crucial because it allows for timely intervention, potentially preventing the progression of symptoms and improving outcomes. Early intervention can lead to better

responses to treatment and may reduce the long-term impact of the disorder. By fostering the awareness of disease, the prevention of chronic situations can be possible leading to early diagnosis. Also, by employing differential diagnosis, which is the process of distinguishing one mental health disorder from another with similar symptoms we can put a step forward in viewpoint of diagnosis. Along with this, it is essential to ensure that individuals receive the most appropriate and effective treatment. Mental health professionals carefully consider all available information and diagnostic criteria to arrive at an accurate diagnosis. The field of mental health diagnosis is continually evolving. Research into biomarkers, genetics, and neuroscience is expanding our understanding of the biological underpinnings of mental health disorders, potentially leading to more accurate and personalized diagnostic methods. (21)

### Treatment Approaches and Therapies

The treatment of mental health disorders is a complex and evolving field, with various approaches and therapies tailored to the unique needs of individuals.

#### A. Psychotherapy

Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (CBT) is a widely used approach that helps individuals identify and change negative thought patterns and behaviors contributing to their mental health issues. Negative thought patterns are cyclical and repetitive which terminate depression, eating disorders, anxiety, and several other disorders. CBT is 50-75% effective for defeating mental health disorders with only 5 – 15 modules. A variation of cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) is dialectical behavior therapy (DBT). Its primary objectives are to teach people how to manage their emotions, live in the present, and build constructive coping mechanisms for stressful situations. DBT helps people, especially those with borderline personality disorder, manage strong emotions by fusing mindfulness with cognitive-behavioral strategies. It can benefit those who struggle to control their emotions or who engage in self-destructive habits like substance abuse or eating disorders. It is also occasionally used to treat post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) with this kind of therapy. (22, 23)

Through a range of methods, psychodynamic psychotherapy encourages self-expression and understanding. In order to uncover the contents of a person's unconscious, including their deepest desires and fears as well as the defences that keep internal conflicts hidden from awareness, psychodynamic therapy depends on the therapist and client's interpersonal interactions. The goal of this therapy is to investigate underlying mechanisms and unresolved conflicts that might be causing a person's mental health issues. Interpersonal therapy, or IPT, is frequently used to treat anxiety and depression. Its goal is to enhance relationships and communication styles. IPT typically focuses on treating depressive symptoms that result from a big loss, severe life changes, or interpersonal conflict. As its name suggests, the goal of IPT is to lessen your distress by enhancing your social skills and interpersonal relationships. (24, 25)

#### B. Medication

Antidepressants medications, such as selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs), are often prescribed for mood disorders like depression and anxiety. Antidepressants generally work by interfering with neurotransmitters in brain to alter mood and behaviour. While they can treat the symptoms of depression, they do not always address its causes. This is why healthcare providers often recommend psychotherapy in addition to depression medication. Antipsychotic medications like Olanzapine, Quetiapine, Clozapine are used to manage symptoms of psychotic disorders, such as schizophrenia. Antipsychotic medications do not 'cure' psychosis, but they are often effective in reducing and controlling many symptoms, including delusions and hallucinations, such as paranoia and hearing voices. anxiety and serious agitation, for example from feeling threatened. incoherent speech and muddled thinking. Lithium, anticonvulsants, and antipsychotics are the three main types of drugs which are used as mood stabilisers. Mood stabilizers like lithium are commonly used to manage bipolar disorder.

#### C. Psychosurgery

Psychosurgery is the term for surgery on the brain intended to cure or lessen serious mental disease. These surgeries alter how the brain functions, changing cognition in the process. Psychosurgery has continued to exist in the form of limited brain lesions, the majority of which are put stereo tactically for a small number of mental diseases. Psychosurgery is permitted in Finland, Sweden, the United Kingdom, Spain, India, Belgium, and the Netherlands, as

well as in restricted and regulated U.S. clinics. Along with motor control, the brain's frontal lobe is responsible for several higher-order cognitive processes. Psychosurgery often has trivial effects on motor function, which is situated in the back of the frontal lobe. Impulse control, judgment in daily life and situations, language, memory, motor function, problem solving, sexual behavior, sociability, and spontaneity are all influenced by the anterior or prefrontal lobe. The frontal lobes have a role in behavior planning, coordination, control, and execution. Psychosurgery's effectiveness was frequently linked to personality changes and decreased spontaneity, which included making the patient more reserved and less inclined to engage in sexual activity. It is also thought that several processes linked to schizophrenia take place in the frontal brain, which could account for some success. <sup>(26, 27)</sup>

#### **D. Alternative Therapies**

Mindfulness and Meditation practices help individuals become more aware of their thoughts and emotions, reducing stress, and promoting well-being. People have been meditating for thousands of years, often as part of a spiritual practice. But in more recent years, mindfulness has become a fashionable way to help people manage their stress and improve their overall well-being and a wealth of research shows it's effective. Psychologists have found that mindfulness meditation changes our brain and biology in positive ways, improving mental and physical health. Physical activity, including yoga, has been shown to have positive effects on mental health by reducing symptoms of depression and anxiety. Asanas, pranayama, and dhyana are general parts of yoga. The prime intent of yoga is to relax the body along with controlling the five senses and reduce mental activity. Balasana, Sukhasana, Bakasana, Paschimottanasana, Chakrasana, and Salamba Sarvangasana are some examples of yoga to improve mental health. Creative therapies by employing music can provide an outlet for expression and emotional processing, particularly for individuals with trauma-related disorders. Music therapy is a crucial complement to the non-pharmacological practices used in the management of psychiatric and behavioural illnesses. These therapies are not only help to treat mental illness but also it also helps to maintain mental health. <sup>(28, 29, 30)</sup>

#### **D. Digital Interventions and Precision Medicine:**

The use of technology like telemedicine to provide remote mental health services has grown significantly, offering increased access to care. Mental health apps have promises in enhancing the monitoring along with management of mental health symptoms or illnesses. Various apps like Open Data Kit, Flowy, and Clickamico offer self-help tools, mood tracking, and guided interventions for conditions like anxiety and depression. The current state of psychiatric diagnoses and treatment is based on symptoms presumed to be identical in all individuals with a particular diagnosis, but this generalized approach is not feasible. Precision medicine aims to provide right patient to the right therapy allowing accurate patient stratification. Emerging research in precision medicine aims to tailor treatments to an individual's genetic, environmental, and lifestyle factors. This approach holds promise for more effective and personalized mental health care. <sup>(31, 32)</sup>

#### **Mental Health Awareness**

May is recognized as Mental Health Awareness Month internationally. Likewise, continual programs like mental health awareness campaigns to raise public awareness of mental health problems are essential to reducing the rate and consequences of disorders related to mental health. These programs are useful tools for promoting knowledge, reducing stigma, and establishing a community that is more accepting and understanding. By giving people a forum to talk about their experiences and tales, they promote compassion, as well as empathy. Increased early intervention, diagnosis, and assistance for people in need follow from this. Furthermore, such campaigns promote the availability of resources, making it easier for individuals to access treatment and therapy options. Eventually, they contribute to a culture where mental health is prioritized, destigmatized, and integrated into everyday conversations, which can lead to a reduced incidence of mental health disorders and improved overall well-being for individuals and communities alike. <sup>(33, 34)</sup>

## Conclusion

Mental health is an integral facet of human well-being, remains a subject of profound importance in our contemporary world. Mental health disorders, often described as hidden battles due to the stigma and lack of diagnosis, constitute a complex and pervasive facet of human well-being. Mental health disorders have burgeoned into a global health concern of significant proportions. These conditions affect a massive portion of the global population, transcending geographical, cultural, and socioeconomic boundaries. Mental health disorders encompass a diverse array of challenges, ranging from mood disorders like depression and bipolar disorder to anxiety disorders, psychotic disorders, and more. These conditions remain inscrutable to many, often concealed beneath the surface of daily life, hidden from view. The stigma surrounding mental health has contributed to this concealment, making it difficult for individuals to openly discuss their struggles and seek help. The COVID-19 pandemic has only magnified this issue, shining a spotlight on the need for a more comprehensive and empathetic approach to mental health care. With the ongoing evolution of societal attitudes and the emergence of research-driven, personalized interventions, the landscape of mental health care is in a state of flux. The significance of early detection, the destigmatization of mental health, and the power of community support cannot be overstated. Initiatives, such as Mental Health Awareness Month, worldwide awareness campaigns, and the openness of individuals who have shared their stories, have ushered in an era where conversations about mental health are not only tolerated but encouraged.

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