**ANXIETY, STRESS, DEPRESSION**

**What is anxiety ?**

Anxiety is a feeling of **worry, fear and uneasiness**. In some situations, for example if you have health or work issues, it is normal to be anxious. But if your anxiety is **severe, persistent, and affect your daily activities**, you may suffer from an **anxiety disorder**.

Anxiety is the main symptom of several anxiety disorders, including **generalized anxiety disorder, phobias or post-traumatic stress disorder**.

Generalized anxiety disorder is the most frequent, and is characterized by an **excessive anxiety, most days for several months**, about a wide range of ordinary issues.

**What are the signs of anxiety ?**

Some of the most frequent symptoms are: **feeling worried, having difficulties sleeping or concentrating, feeling like there is a disconnection between your mind and body, increased heart beats, muscle tensions**…

You can also experience **anxiety attacks**, that are described as an overwhelming fear associated with heart palpitations, chest pain, rapid breathing, shaking, or sweating.

**What are the causes of anxiety ?**

**Many factors** may play a role: brain biology, stressful environment, history of traumatic experiences, history of long-term painful disease, or even some health conditions…

**How to treat anxiety ?**

Management of anxiety often relies upon a combination of therapies, including **pharmacological treatment, psychotherapy, and lifestyle changes**.

Medications, typically antidepressants and sedatives, are not always necessary.

Psychological therapies, such as cognitive behavioral therapy, psychoanalysis or talk therapies, are often very effective.

Lifestyle changes can also help: regular physical activity, meditation, relaxation, yoga…

**What is stress ?**

Stress is a **subjective psychological and physical reaction to life events**. When stress is persistent and associated with a feeling of being overwhelmed and unable to cope with the pressure, it can lead to anxiety and fatigue.

**How to prevent and cope with stress?**

The goal is to be able to **prevent unnecessary stress and effectively cope with the rest**.

Here are some simple tips:

- Try to identify the causes of your stress

- Accept that you cannot control everything

- Manage your time effectively, prioritize tasks and do one task at a time

- Try to keep a positive attitude

- Don’t be too hard on yourself

- Take time to relax: yoga, meditation, relaxation, deep breathing…

- Exercise regularly and get enough sleep

**What are the symptoms of depression ?**

The most frequent symptoms are:

* Feeling sad, anxious, hopeless, worthless, irritated, frustrated, guilty
* Losing interest in activities that you used to enjoy
* Fatigue
* Trouble to concentrate
* Insomnia or oversleeping
* Change in appetite or weight

**What are the causes of depression ?**

There is not any specific cause, but depression is often influenced by **risk factors**, such as:

* Traumatic or stressful life events
* Family history of depression
* Chronic and painful medical conditions
* Some medications or alcohol misuse

**How to treat depression ?**

The management of depression is usually multidimensional and tailored for the patient. It includes:

* Pharmacological treatments
* Psychological interventions: cognitive behavior therapy, counselling, talk therapies, psychoanalysis, problem solving therapy…
* Self-help and lifestyle changes: physical exercise, meditation, relaxation, acupuncture…

If you suffer from depression, you should consult with a health-care professional for an adapted evaluation and management. You may find it difficult to ask for help, but there is no shame in seeking support!