**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!

**DEPRESSION**

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**PAIN IN SYSTEMIC LUPUS ERYTHEMATOSUS**

* **What is pain caused by ?**

Pain is usually caused by a **specific injury or a medical condition**, leading to some **tissue lesions**.

Patients feel pain when specific receptors called nociceptors detect tissue damage and transmit the information along the nerves and the spinal cord to the brain, that converts the signal into pain perception, thoughts, and emotions.

Sometimes, the **nervous system** (nerves, brain…) **itself is damaged and dysfunctional**, leading to amplification of pain perception, or pain signals without actual tissue lesion.

In patients with systemic lupus erythematosus, the inflammation associated with the disease activity is the most common cause of pain.

* **Are there different kinds of pain?**

Pain can be classified into **3 major types of pain**, depending on the physiopathological pathway leading to the pain perception:

* **Nociceptive pain** is the most common type of pain. It is caused by **tissue damage**, resulting from an **injury** or an **inflammation**. The pain is usually well localized, with aching or throbbing quality.
* **Neuropathic pain** develops when **the nervous system (nerves, brain…) is damaged or dysfunctional**. The pain is typically chronic and described as burning, numbness or electric shocks. Many different conditions and diseases cause neuropathic pain, including nerve compression, diabetes, cancer, stroke, post-herpetic neuralgia…
* **Central sensitization** results from **an altered central perception of the pain signal**, without any tissue or neurologic lesion. This kind of pain is chronic and often associated with psychological symptoms.
* **What about pain in systemic lupus erythematosus ?**

Pain is one of the most frequent and bothersome symptom in systemic lupus.

In patients with systemic lupus, pain often results from the **inflammation associated with the disease activity**: arthralgia, myalgia, chest pain due to pericarditis or pleurisy, oral ulcers…

**Fibromyalgia** is another frequent cause of pain in patients with systemic lupus erythematosus, as it affects 6.2% to 30% of systemic lupus patients. Fibromyalgia is a disorder in which the brain amplifies the way it processes painful signals. It is characterized by **chronic widespread musculoskeletal pain**, often associated with fatigue and mood issues.

Your pain may also result from non-lupus related causes, such as non-traumatic facture, sprain, osteoarthritis, nerve compression, or any other condition.

* **What are the consequences of chronic pain?**

Chronic pain lasts for over 3 months, and sometimes continues long after you recover from an injury or an illness.

It often **interferes with the quality of life** and has a lot of **psychological, cognitive, and social consequences**, such as fatigue, sleep disorders, concentration difficulties, or work issues. Complications of chronic pain also include anxiety, depression, or substance abuse disorders.

* **How to manage pain ?**

There **are many treatment options** to control pain. The aim is to find **an effective and safe combination of therapies** that works for you!

A wide range of **drugs** are used to manage pain. The pharmacologic management of pain is tailored for each patient, depending on the pain profile (acute, chronic, nociceptive, neuropathic, central sensitization…) and intensity.

Non-pharmacological options include **physical therapies** (physiotherapy, massages, physical activity…), **specific techniques** (acupuncture, transcutaneous nerve stimulation…), **psychological interventions** (cognitive behavioral therapies, hypnosis), or **relaxation techniques** (meditation, yoga…).

* **How to handle pain when it persists?**

Here is some advice to cope with persistent pain:

* Accept support from friends, family or community groups
* Find activities you enjoy that do not worsen your pain
* Get the rest you need without feeling guilty
* Try to focus on your day-to-day function rather than on what you are not able to do

**QUALITY OF SLEEP**

* **How many hours of sleep per night do I need ?**

There are no official recommendations about how much sleep you should get. **Adults usually need around 8 hours of sleep each night for an optimal daytime functioning**, although some people require more or less sleep.

* **What are the causes of poor quality of sleep ?**

A lot of different factors can influence the quality of your sleep, such as :

* Lifestyle factors: jetlag, shift work, drinking caffeing late in the afternoon, unconfortable sleeping environnement, change of routine…
* Stress, family or work problems, anxiety or depression
* Pain
* Medical conditions: hyperthyroidism, acid reflux…
* Medications: thyroid hormons or steroids, that you should take in the morning

A poor quality of sleep can also be a symptom of **sleep disorders**, such as sleep apnea or restless legs syndrome.

* **What is sleep apnea ?**

Sleep apnea is a medical condition in which **breathing repeatedly interrupts during the night**, leading to fatigue, day-time drowsiness, and cardiovascular issues.

It can be classified as obstructive or central sleep apnea. **Obstructive sleep apnea** is caused by a blockage of the airway during sleeping time, and is often associated with snoring or gasping for air while sleeping. **Central sleep apnea** is a rare disease defined by pauses in breathing due to a lack of proper signals from the brain to the muscles that control the respiratory efforts.

* **What is restless legs syndrome ?**

Restless legs syndrome is characterized by an **irresistible urge to move the legs** in the evening and during nighttime hours, usually because of an unpleasant sensation. It leads to a poor quality of sleep.

* **What are the consequences of sleep deprivation ?**

Sleep deprivation can be a cause of **fatigue**, **day-time drowsiness**, **cognitive dysfunction** such as memory or concentrations difficulties, **slower reaction time** that can lead to accidents, **headache**, **irritability**… It has also been associated with a higher risk of **cardiovascular diseases**.

* **How to improve insomnia or quality of sleep ?**

First, you can talk about it to a healthcare professional that could evaluate the severity and the causes of your sleep issues and give you personalized management recommendations.

Sleeping drugs can be prescribed if insomnia is severe or persistant, but should be taken only for a short time, because some patients become addicted.

Here are some simple sleep habits that could help you getting a better night’s sleep :

* keep regular sleep hours
* make sure your bedroom is dark, quiet and not too hot
* minimize screen time before bedtime
* exercise regularly
* avoid late big meal, coffee and alcohol before going to bed
* try to relax before bedtime

**FATIGUE IN SYSTEMIC LUPUS ERYTHEMATOSUS**

**What exactly is fatigue**

**How frequent is fatigue in systemic lupus erythematosus**

**What are the consequences of fatigue in systemic lupus erythematosus**

**What are the predictors of fatigue in systemic lupus erythematosus ?**

**How can I assess my fatigue level in systemic lupus erythematosus ?**

**How to manage fatigue in systemic lupus erythematosus ?**

**What are the pharmacological treatments that can improve fatigue ?**

**What are the non-pharmacological interventions that can improve fatigue ?**