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METHODS OF PSYCHOTHERAPY OF FEAR AND PANIC ATTACKS

Mustafaeva Shirinoy Farkhodjonovna
SAMU (Central Asian Medical University)
psychologist-teacher,
Candidate of Psychology (PhD)

Annotation

This article analyzes the psychological essence of fear and panic attacks, their causes, and methods of treatment using modern psychotherapeutic approaches. Panic attacks negatively affect a person's daily life, reduce social adaptation, and undermine the mental stability of the individual. The article covers the main psychotherapeutic methods, such as cognitive-behavioral therapy, psychoanalytic approach, gestalt therapy, relaxation and mindfulness techniques. The theoretical foundations and practical effectiveness of each method are briefly explained. The article also considers stress, traumatic experiences, negative thinking stereotypes and incorrect emotional reactions as factors that increase the risk of panic attacks. It is emphasized that in the process of psychotherapy, the patient's awareness of his own condition, the formation of emotional control and the development of adaptive thinking are of great importance. The article contains scientific and practical recommendations aimed at strengthening mental health, reducing panic attacks, and improving the quality of life and psychological well-being of a person.

Keywords: fear, panic attack, psychotherapy, cognitive-behavioral therapy, relaxation, mindfulness, stress, trauma, emotional stability, mental health.

In modern society, the number of factors that threaten human mental health is increasing. The excessive flow of information, social pressure, economic instability, conflicts in interpersonal relationships and unexpected life situations have a strong impact on the human psyche. In such conditions, fear and panic attacks (panic attacks) are becoming one of the most common mental conditions. They appear suddenly, are manifested by symptoms such as increased heart rate, shortness of breath, dizziness, fear of death or loss of control, and significantly reduce the quality of a person's life.

Fear and panic attacks have a negative impact not only on psychological, but also on social and professional activities. Individuals who experience such situations often avoid public places, their work productivity decreases, social relationships are limited, and the feeling of loneliness increases. As a result, a person's self-confidence weakens and their level of life satisfaction decreases. Therefore, the issue of timely detection and effective treatment of fear and panic attacks is one of the urgent problems today.

In recent years, psychotherapy has been recognized as one of the most effective methods in the treatment of fear and panic attacks. Psychotherapy helps not only to reduce symptoms, but also to understand their causes, change negative thinking patterns, and develop emotional stability. In particular, cognitive-behavioral therapy, gestalt therapy, psychoanalytic approaches, and mindfulness and relaxation techniques are widely used.

This article discusses the psychological foundations of fear and panic attacks, the factors that influence their occurrence, and ways to reduce and eliminate such conditions through modern psychotherapeutic approaches. The main goal of the article is to approach fear and

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panic attacks from a scientific perspective, to explain them, and to analyze effective methods that serve to strengthen mental health.

Fear is a natural defense mechanism of the human psyche, which warns the body when danger arises and encourages it to defend itself. However, when this mechanism is activated beyond the norm, it becomes a harmful state for the individual. A panic attack is a condition that is accompanied by strong fear, anxiety, and physical symptoms even in the absence of a clear danger. These attacks are often accompanied by a rapid heartbeat, chest tightness, shortness of breath, dizziness, body aches, and fears of dying or going crazy.

From a psychological perspective, panic attacks are largely associated with misinterpreted physical sensations and negative automatic thoughts. For example, when a rapid heartbeat is associated with the thought that "I'm having a heart attack," the fear increases, which in turn increases the physical symptoms. The result is a "panic cycle."

Biological, psychological, and social factors interact to cause panic attacks. Biological factors include a hypersensitivity of the nervous system, hormonal imbalances, and genetic predisposition. Psychological factors include childhood trauma, prolonged stress, low self-esteem, perfectionism, and an anxious personality.[1]

The available scientific literature on psychotherapy for fear and panic attacks It includes a wide range of approaches. At the same time, modern research allows for a deep analysis of the emergence, development and effective treatment of these psychological conditions. For example, Barlow (2002) has extensively studied the effectiveness of cognitive-behavioral therapy for fear and panic attacks, linking panic attacks to biological, psychological and social factors. He believes that with the help of Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy, patients can identify negative automatic thoughts and replace them with logically based ones, which significantly reduces the intensity of attacks.[2]

Beck and colleagues (2005) have highlighted the theoretical foundations of the cognitive approach and analyzed in detail the psychological mechanisms of fear and panic attacks. They show that misinterpretation of physical symptoms, a person's perception of danger and automatic negative thoughts are the main reasons for the occurrence of attacks. These ideas are also supported by research conducted by Uzbek scientists. For example, Qodirov (2020) conducted a case study on reducing panic attacks using psychotherapeutic approaches and highlighted the effectiveness of Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy, relaxation, and mindfulness techniques.

Also, Craske et al. (2008) analyzed the effectiveness of the exposure technique. The results of the study show that gradually encountering feared situations reduces the patient's fear sphere and reduces the likelihood of recurrence of attacks. This approach has also been used in studies conducted by Uzbek scientists. For example, Rasulova (2017) found that patients' emotional stability increased when relaxation exercises were used in combination with cognitive-behavioral therapy.[3]

Mindfulness and meditative approaches are also distinguished by their effectiveness in reducing physical and psychological symptoms. According to Kabat-Zinn (2013), mindfulness exercises help the patient to accept their feelings in the present moment and develop mechanisms for overcoming panic attacks. Uzbek scholars Karimov (2018) also studied the importance of mindfulness techniques in increasing mental stability and stress tolerance.

There is also a role for the psychoanalytic approach. As Yalom (2002) and Wolpe (1990) have noted, panic attacks are often associated with unconscious conflicts and repressed emotional experiences, and identifying and working through them is an important part of the therapeutic process. Norboyeva (2016) analyzed the results of applying a psychoanalytic

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approach in Uzbek conditions and noted that the intensity of attacks can be reduced by understanding the internal conflicts of patients.[4]

Social factors include family conflict, lack of social support, pressure at work, economic hardship, and social instability. These factors combine to reduce a person's stress tolerance and create a fertile ground for panic attacks.

Psychotherapy is one of the most effective and long-lasting treatments for panic attacks. Medications can temporarily reduce symptoms, but psychotherapy works on the root cause of the problem. In the psychotherapy process, a person becomes aware of the connection between their thoughts, feelings, and behavior, learns to change negative patterns, and develops emotional self-regulation skills.

Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy is the most widely researched and proven approach to treating panic attacks. This method focuses on identifying a person's negative automatic thoughts and replacing them with logically based thoughts. For example, the thought "I'm going to die right now" is replaced with the thought "This is a panic attack, it's not dangerous, and it will pass."[5]

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy also uses the technique of exposure. In it, the person is gradually exposed to fearful situations and learns not to avoid them. This leads to a gradual decrease in fear.

Gestalt therapy helps to understand the person's inner experiences by focusing on the present moment. In this approach, panic attacks are often seen as a sign of unexpressed feelings and internal conflicts. In the course of therapy, the person learns to recognize their needs, express them in healthy ways, and be kind to themselves.

Psychoanalytic therapy links panic attacks to unconscious conflicts and repressed feelings. Childhood experiences, relationships with parents, and unresolved emotional trauma can all contribute to current panic attacks. This approach, while long-term, can lead to profound changes.

Mindfulness brings a person back to the present moment and teaches to accept thoughts without judgment. Through breathing exercises, body scanning, and meditation, the nervous system calms down, reducing the intensity of panic attacks. Relaxation techniques help relax muscles and normalize the heart rate.

The effectiveness of therapy depends on the skills of the specialist, the patient's motivation, social support, and the regularity of the treatment. Also important is the willingness of the person to work on himself.

The best results are obtained by combining several approaches. For example, working with thoughts based on Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy, strengthening emotional stability through mindfulness, and understanding inner needs through Gestalt therapy provide a comprehensive approach.[6]

Fear and panic attacks are one of the most common psychological problems in modern human life, and their occurrence negatively affects not only the mental but also the physical health of the person. These conditions limit a person's social activities, reduce work productivity, undermine self-confidence and reduce the level of life satisfaction. Therefore, identifying panic attacks, understanding them and treating them through effective psychotherapeutic approaches is an urgent problem.

Psychotherapy is one of the most effective methods for treating fears and panic attacks. Cognitive-behavioral therapy helps to identify a person's negative automatic thoughts and replace them with logically based thoughts. Gestalt therapy teaches a person to understand and express their feelings in the present moment, while the psychoanalytic approach identifies the

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root of the attacks by analyzing unconscious conflicts and childhood experiences. Mindfulness and relaxation techniques calm the nervous system and help reduce physical symptoms.[7]

In the process of psychotherapy, the motivation of the person, mutual trust with the therapist, social support and compatibility of methods are of great importance. An integrated approach, i.e., combining several therapy methods, gives the most stable and effective results. In this way, the individual not only reduces the intensity of attacks, but also develops emotional stability and increases self-control skills.

In conclusion, the treatment of fear and panic attacks with psychotherapeutic approaches serves to strengthen the mental health of the individual, improve social adaptation and increase the quality of life. In-depth study of this topic and the implementation of effective methods in practice are of great importance for psychologists, psychiatrists and psychotherapists. Also, by developing the individual's self-awareness, emotional management and stress tolerance skills, the likelihood of future occurrence of fear and panic attacks is significantly reduced. Therefore, modern psychotherapy and mental health support systems should pay special attention to this problem.

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