

Which is better in Panic Attacks, Medications or Psychotherapy

Contributed by Webmaster

By David Smith

Most researches promote that a 10-12 session therapy helps as much as medications against panic attacks.

This approach utilizes coaching as anxiety management techniques and usually works better than medications especially in terms of recurrence after final treatment.

Selecting a treatment is a doctor's recommendation for the therapy regimen. In severe cases, therapy and medications are combined to get the best results. For infrequent attacks, one can try self-treatment but are usually not proven to work depending on one's capacity and discipline. If after a few internal self therapy sessions, one is still not panic free, then trying another method is usually beneficial.

It is known that most stronger medications give out a faster effect compared to behavioral therapies. The known disadvantages however include side effects and the return of panic attacks after the medication is terminated. In behavioral therapy, panic attacks rarely occur after full treatment and if they do, they are often less than with medication. There is also no risk of side effects. Known disadvantages include slow response to treatment in some individuals. They may also be expensive and time-consuming. Some people also are aware of the stigma attached to therapies especially in social circles.

For some people a CBT or cognitive-behavioral therapy is actually fun as they are allowed to relate with other people suffering from the same condition and are able to recognize the different patterns of a panic attack. Psychologically, the mind does its own effort to overcome a problem when it sees one from another person's point of view. This is more applicable to persons in the beginning stages of panic attack syndromes.

Therapists try very hard to develop confidence in their patients and point out where work is needed. They are also there to aid patients which is ultimately better as psychological assistance is provided. Freely talking about a problem also relieves tension and in a way helps alleviate patterns of disruptions in panic attacks.

For fast relief of panic attacks, some people prefer medications compared to therapies which promotes a longer effect in the treatment of panic attacks. Medication may be prescribed by doctors who, through the lack of other options and knowledge of non-chemical substance treatments believe that panic attacks or anxiety are chemical conditions that a magic pill can alleviate. Sometimes in desperation, and in some cases where anxiety can still be controlled, medications may aid but soon after its effects wear off, the risks of succumbing to another attack is very much anticipated. Other panic attacks brought about by agoraphobia and dependence require more than just plain medications in its treatment.

Studying the patient before prescribing the medications is very important. Knowing the occurrence of attacks, its frequency and its strengths is vital prior to medical prescription. Other psychologists and psychiatrists would require their patients to rely on therapy and use medications for a certain period of time to allow the body and the mind to treat itself after a period of normalcy provided by the meds in the intervals between attacks.

Common medications include antidepressants to treat the panic disorder which is effective and totally eliminates panic with little or no side effects. However, antidepressants are quite slow-acting and cannot be taken in large doses all at once. Sometimes, by the time the antidepressant effects are fully generated in the body, non-invasive therapy through counseling may have already taken effect and decreased panic attacks through the brain's own adjustment with little therapy.

Valium group or benzodiazepines are fast-acting within the first hour of the first dose. The side-effect is it potential to promote addiction as the body gets used to the medication. Usually, continuous usage after a period of 2-3 weeks results to drug tolerance.

Some doctors would offer benzodiazepines for a few weeks while you're trying to find an effective therapist. As soon as they are tapered off, the doctor assumes that one should be no worse when you stop than when you started. Some individuals can take medications for a few months, then stop, and remain free from panic attacks. Ideally, medications are discontinued after a specific goal is attained.

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