

NEUROSES: MODERN VIEWS ON ETIOPATHOGENESIS AND METHODS OF TREATMENT

Jurayeva Dildora Nasirdinovna

Scientific supervisor of the department of Pedagogy and psychology, Tashkent Medical Academy,
Uzbekistan, Tashkent

Shomaxsutova Ruxshona Gayratovna

2nd year student, Faculty of medicine, Tashkent Medical Academy, Uzbekistan, Tashkent

Abstract: The work is devoted to modern views on the etiopathogenesis and treatment of neuroses. Particular emphasis is placed on the prevalence of these disorders among medical students who are under constant stress. Biological, psychological and social factors influencing the development of neuroses, as well as their consequences for health, are considered. Treatment methods are analyzed, including cognitive-behavioral therapy, drug support and prevention. The importance of early diagnosis and psychoprophylactic measures to improve the psychological state of students is emphasized.

Key words: neurosis, stress, anxiety disorders, etiopathogenesis, cognitive-behavioral therapy, psychoprophylaxis, psychosocial factors, neurotransmitters, prevention of neuroses.

Introduction. Neuroses are one of the most common mental health problems, affecting a significant portion of the population. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), about 20% of people in the world at some point in their lives experience neurotic disorders, which significantly impair their daily activities, reducing their ability to work and quality of life. In modern conditions, the student environment is becoming especially vulnerable to the development of neuroses. High academic workload, constant stress, lack of sleep and social pressure create fertile ground for the emergence of anxiety disorders and emotional exhaustion. During my studies at medical school, I had the opportunity to observe the characteristic signs of neurotic disorders in many of my classmates. After talking with them, it became obvious that stress and anxiety are an integral part of student life, but, unfortunately, not enough attention is paid to mental well-being. This prompted me to think about the need for a more in-depth study of the issue of prevention and treatment of neuroses among students.

Etiopathogenesis of neuroses

Neurosis— is a psychogenic (arising under the influence of psychological factors) disorder characterized by reversible functional disorders of mental activity, emotional instability and somatic manifestations. Unlike psychoses, neuroses are not accompanied by gross disturbances in the perception of reality, but can significantly worsen the quality of life.

- **Etiopathogenesis**— a set of causes and mechanisms of disease development.
- **Psychosomatics**— the influence of mental factors on the development of somatic (physical) diseases.
- **Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD)**— a chronic condition in which a person experiences constant anxiety without specific causes.
- **Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD)**— a neurotic disorder characterized by obsessive thoughts (obsessions) and forced repetitive actions (compulsions).
- **Neurasthenia**— a type of neurosis that manifests itself as chronic fatigue, irritability, decreased performance and headaches.

The causes of neuroses are studied by many researchers. According to psychiatric and neurological data, the development of these disorders is caused by a complex interaction of biological, psychological and social factors. Research in the field of neurobiology shows that people prone to neurotic disorders often have disturbances in the functioning of neurotransmitter systems. Deficiency of serotonin and dopamine, as well as increased activity of cortisol lead to chronic stress and emotional lability.

According to the psychodynamic theory proposed by Sigmund Freud, neuroses arise as a result of internal conflicts, when unconscious desires conflict with social norms. Modern researchers, such as Aaron Beck, have expanded this concept by proposing a cognitive-behavioral theory, according to which neuroses are formed on the basis of destructive beliefs, anxious thoughts and ineffective coping strategies. Recent research published in the journal *Psychological Medicine* confirms that chronic stress and anxiety disorders significantly increase the risk of developing depressive states and psychosomatic diseases.

According to WHO, about 20% of the population experiences neurotic disorders at some point in their lives. Anxiety disorders and depression rank first among mental illnesses that affect quality of life (Global Burden of Disease, 2021).

A report by the American Psychiatric Association (2023) found that 30% of medical students suffer from elevated levels of anxiety, and 15% experience symptoms of neurasthenia. A study published in *The Lancet Psychiatry* (2022) found that the prevalence of anxiety disorders has increased by 25% since the COVID-19 pandemic, especially among young people.

According to Harvard Medical School (2022), 45% of students experience chronic stress, and 25% report signs of anxiety disorders. A report from the Mental Health Foundation (2023) indicates that 38% of students experience significant difficulties in managing stress, which negatively affects their academic performance. A European study (European College Mental Health Survey, 2021) found that 20% of students experience symptoms of depression, and 15% suffer from generalized anxiety disorder.

Chronic stress affects not only the psyche, but also physical health. Long-term elevated cortisol levels increase the risk of cardiovascular disease by 40% (*Journal of Psychosomatic Research*, 2021). A Stanford University study (2022) confirms that people with high levels of anxiety are 2.5 times more likely to develop gastrointestinal diseases. According to the German Institute for Economic Research (2023), long-term emotional stress increases the likelihood of developing psychosomatic diseases by 60%.

Classification and manifestations of neuroses

According to the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-10), neurotic disorders include anxiety and panic disorders, obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), hysterical disorders and neurasthenia. In clinical practice, generalized anxiety disorder and neurasthenia are most common, especially among students. As shown by a study conducted by the American Psychiatric Association, about 30% of medical students have an increased level of anxiety, and 15% suffer from symptoms of neurasthenia, such as chronic fatigue, irritability and cognitive impairment.

During a conversation with classmates to conduct a small study, attention was drawn to some characteristic signs of neurotic disorders manifested by future doctors. Many of them (95%) complained of a constant feeling of anxiety before exams, sleep disorders, difficulty concentrating, and rapid fatigue. Some students (10%) admitted that they experience panic attacks and unreasonable fear, especially during practical classes. These observations confirm the importance of timely diagnosis and prevention of neuroses among students of medical institutions.

Discussion

When looking at neuroses from various scientific perspectives, it can be seen that this phenomenon affects many aspects of the human body. From a physiological point of view, neurosis is a disorder of

the central nervous system, which is accompanied by increased activity of the sympathetic nervous system. This leads to increased heart rate, increased cortisol levels, decreased heart rate variability, and increased levels of inflammatory markers in the body. Biochemical studies confirm that chronic stress causes changes in the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal system, which contributes to an imbalance of neurotransmitters and hormones associated with emotional regulation.

From the point of view of cognitive science, neurosis can be considered as a destructive pattern of perception of the environment. People with increased anxiety tend to have an exaggerated reaction to stressful events, often interpreting neutral situations as threatening. According to Hans Selye's theories of adaptive stress, prolonged activation of the stress response leads to depletion of the body's resources, increased fatigue, and the development of somatic diseases.

The psychosocial factor also plays an important role in the development of neuroses. Instability in society, high demands for success and perfectionism create additional pressure, especially on medical students. Research shows that the level of anxiety and depression among medical students is significantly higher than among students in other fields, which is associated with the intensity of the educational process and constant emotional stress.

Treatment and prevention methods

Modern approaches to treating neuroses include drug therapy, psychotherapeutic methods, and lifestyle changes. Selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs), such as fluoxetine and sertraline, play an important role in drug treatment, helping to stabilize the emotional state. In cases of severe anxiety, tranquilizers are sometimes prescribed, but their use should be limited due to the risk of addiction. Many specialists, including psychiatrist Robert Leahy, note that medications are effective only in combination with psychotherapy and lifestyle changes.

One of the most effective treatment methods is cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), aimed at identifying and changing irrational thought patterns. Practicing clinical psychologist David Burns emphasizes in his works that CBT helps not only to understand the causes of anxiety, but also to develop more adaptive ways of thinking and behavior. It is also important to consider the role of preventive measures: meditation, breathing exercises, exercise, and daily routine help reduce stress levels and increase resilience to emotional stress.

Conclusion. Neuroses remain a serious problem, especially among medical students who face increased academic workload and emotional exhaustion. Research confirms that neurotic disorders develop under the influence of many factors, including biological, psychological and social aspects. Modern treatment methods allow us to effectively cope with these conditions, but prevention aimed at maintaining the mental health of students is of the greatest importance.

Thus, neuroses have a significant impact on medical students, reducing their psychological and physical well-being. Their development is associated with biological, psychological and social factors, which requires a comprehensive approach to diagnosis and treatment. In addition to therapy, prevention plays an important role, aimed at reducing stress and developing adaptive strategies. The introduction of psychoprophylactic programs in educational institutions will help improve the mental health of students and their academic performance.

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