

ANXIETY DISORDERS IN THE MODERN ERA: SCOPE OF HOMOEOPATHIC THERAPEUTICS

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ABSTRACT

Background: Anxiety disorders are among the most prevalent mental health conditions worldwide, significantly affecting quality of life, productivity, and overall well-being. Rapid urbanization, technological advancements, socioeconomic pressures, and lifestyle changes have contributed to a growing burden of anxiety-related illnesses in the modern era. Conventional management includes psychotherapy and pharmacological interventions; however, concerns regarding adverse effects, dependence, and incomplete symptom relief have encouraged exploration of complementary and alternative approaches. Homoeopathy, based on the principles of individualization and holistic healing, offers a patient-centered therapeutic option.

Evidence: Homoeopathic literature describes individualized prescribing based on the totality of symptoms, constitution, and susceptibility of the patient, and suggests a possible complementary role in anxiety disorders. However, further high-quality clinical research is required to strengthen the evidence base.

Scope: This article discusses the epidemiology, etiopathogenesis, clinical manifestations, and management of anxiety disorders, with particular emphasis on the scope of homoeopathic therapeutics.

Keywords: Anxiety Disorders, Mental Health, Homoeopathy, Individualized Treatment, Psychosomatic Disorders, Modern Lifestyle

www.njmrys.com | eISSN: 2395-2911 | Date of Received: 29-08-2026 | Date of Acceptance: 19-09-2026 | Date of Publication: 4-10-2016

INTRODUCTION

Anxiety is a normal emotional response to stress or perceived danger. However, when anxiety becomes excessive, persistent, and disproportionate to the triggering situation, it may develop into an anxiety disorder. These disorders represent a major public health challenge and are associated with significant psychological, social, and economic consequences.[1]

The modern era is characterized by increased competition, digital connectivity, information overload, social isolation, financial insecurity, and occupational stress. These factors have contributed to a rise in anxiety disorders across all age groups, making effective management strategies increasingly important.[1,2]

Homoeopathy, with its holistic approach to health and disease, aims to address not only the symptoms of anxiety but also the underlying susceptibility and individual constitutional characteristics of the patient.[6,8]

EPIDEMIOLOGY

Anxiety disorders are among the most common psychiatric conditions globally and affect individuals across all age groups. They affect millions of individuals and contribute substantially to disability-adjusted life years (DALYs). Epidemiological studies indicate lifetime prevalence rates ranging from 10% to 30% in different populations.[1,5] The World Health Organization recognizes anxiety disorders as a leading cause of disability and reduced quality of life worldwide.[2]

Women are generally affected nearly twice as frequently as men. Anxiety disorders commonly begin during adolescence or early adulthood and often follow a chronic relapsing

course.[1,5] The prevalence has increased with urbanization and modern lifestyle stressors. Anxiety frequently coexists with depression, substance-use disorders, cardiovascular diseases, sleep disorders (insomnia), and functional somatic syndromes.[1]

The COVID-19 pandemic further highlighted the vulnerability of populations to anxiety-related conditions, with increased rates of generalized anxiety, health anxiety, social anxiety, and stress-related disorders reported worldwide.[3]

ANXIETY DISORDERS: AN OVERVIEW

According to contemporary psychiatric classifications, anxiety disorders include:[4]

- Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD)
- Panic Disorder
- Social Anxiety Disorder (Social Phobia)
- Specific Phobias
- Separation Anxiety Disorder
- Agoraphobia
- Anxiety associated with medical conditions or substance use

These disorders are characterized by excessive fear, worry, apprehension, and associated behavioural disturbances.

ETIOLOGICAL FACTORS IN THE MODERN ERA

The causation of anxiety disorders is multifactorial, involving the interplay of psychological, biological, social, and technological influences, as summarized in Table-1.[1,5]

Table-1: Etiological factors in anxiety disorders in the modern era

ETIOLOGICAL FACTORS	
Psychological	Chronic stress; emotional trauma; childhood adversity; personality traits such as perfectionism; low self-esteem
Biological	Genetic predisposition; neurotransmitter imbalance; hormonal disturbances; altered stress-response mechanisms
Social	Occupational pressure; academic competition; financial instability; relationship conflicts; social isolation
Technological	Excessive social media use; cyberbullying; constant digital exposure; sleep disruption due to screen time; information overload

CLINICAL FEATURES

Anxiety disorders present with a combination of psychological, physical, and behavioural manifestations (Table-2).[4,5]

Table-2: Clinical features of anxiety disorders

CLINICAL FEATURES	
Psychological	Excessive worry; apprehension; fearfulness; restlessness; irritability; difficulty concentrating; feeling overwhelmed
Physical	Palpitations; sweating; trembling; dry mouth; chest discomfort; gastrointestinal disturbances; headache; muscle tension; fatigue
Behavioural	Avoidance behaviour; social withdrawal; reassurance-seeking; reduced productivity; sleep disturbances

Impact of Anxiety Disorders

Untreated anxiety can lead to:

- Impaired social functioning
- Occupational difficulties
- Academic underachievement
- Relationship problems
- Substance dependence
- Depression
- Increased healthcare utilization
- Reduced quality of life

CONVENTIONAL MANAGEMENT

Psychotherapy

- Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT)
- Exposure Therapy
- Mindfulness-Based Interventions
- Relaxation Techniques

Pharmacotherapy

- Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors (SSRIs)
- Serotonin-Norepinephrine Reuptake Inhibitors (SNRIs)
- Benzodiazepines
- Beta-blockers in selected cases

Although effective, pharmacological treatment may be associated with adverse effects, withdrawal symptoms, and variable patient compliance.[1,5]

SCOPE OF HOMOEOPATHIC THERAPEUTICS

Homoeopathy is a system of medicine founded by Dr. Samuel Hahnemann based on the principle “*Similia Similibus Curentur*” (let like cures like). It views disease as a dynamic disturbance of the vital force and emphasizes individualized treatment.[6]

Why Homoeopathy in Anxiety Disorders?

Homoeopathy offers:

- Individualized treatment
- Holistic assessment of mental and physical symptoms
- Consideration of emotional and constitutional factors
- Minimal adverse effects when appropriately prescribed
- Long-term management aimed at improving overall well-being

The homoeopathic physician evaluates:

- Nature of anxiety
- Triggering factors
- Emotional responses
- Personality traits
- Fears and phobias
- Associated physical symptoms
- Constitutional characteristics

HOMOEOPATHIC APPROACH TO ANXIETY DISORDERS

Individualization

No single remedy is prescribed for all patients with anxiety. Treatment is based on the totality of symptoms.[6]

Constitutional Treatment

Constitutional prescribing seeks to address the patient's overall susceptibility and restore mental and physical balance.[6,8]

Miasmatic Consideration

Many homoeopaths consider miasmatic background while managing chronic anxiety states, particularly when symptoms are recurrent and deeply rooted.[6,8]

IMPORTANT HOMOEOPATHIC REMEDIES

The remedies most frequently described in the homoeopathic literature for anxiety states, with their characteristic indications, are given below.[7]

Aconitum Napellus: Sudden panic attacks; fear of death; acute anxiety after shock or fright; restlessness and agitation.[7]

Arsenicum Album: Anxiety about health; fear of disease and death; fastidiousness; restlessness with exhaustion; anxiety worse after midnight.[7]

Argentum Nitricum: Anticipatory anxiety; examination fear; stage fright; impulsive behaviour; gastrointestinal disturbances from nervousness.[7]

Aurum Muriaticum: Deep sadness or melancholy; self-reproach and feelings of failure; excessive sense of duty and responsibility; anxiety about health, responsibilities, or the future; brooding over problems when alone; fear that a serious misfortune is impending; irritability and sensitivity to contradiction; despair, sometimes with suicidal thoughts in severe descriptions.[7]

Gelsemium Sempervirens: Performance anxiety; weakness and trembling; dullness and mental exhaustion; fear before examinations or public speaking.[7]

Kali Phosphoricum: Nervous exhaustion; anxiety from overwork; mental fatigue; stress-related weakness.[7]

Ignatia Amara: Anxiety following grief; emotional shock; mood fluctuations; sighing and emotional sensitivity.[7]

Lycopodium Clavatum: Lack of self-confidence; fear of public appearance; anticipatory anxiety; performance-related stress.[7]

Pulsatilla Nigricans: Anxiety with emotional dependence; desire for consolation; changeable moods; weeping disposition.[7]

Calcarea Carbonica: Anxiety regarding health and future security; fear of misfortune; mental and physical fatigue; overwhelmed by responsibilities.[7]

LIFESTYLE MEASURES ALONGSIDE HOMOEOPATHIC TREATMENT

For optimal results, homoeopathic treatment should be complemented by:

- Regular physical exercise
- Adequate sleep
- Balanced nutrition
- Meditation and relaxation practices
- Stress management techniques
- Reduced screen time
- Social support and healthy relationships

LIMITATIONS AND CHALLENGES

Despite widespread use, homoeopathy faces challenges:

- Need for further high-quality clinical research
- Variability in study methodologies
- Difficulty in standardizing individualized prescriptions
- Requirement for careful case-taking and long-term follow-up

Patients with severe symptoms, functional impairment, or any suicidal ideation require prompt psychiatric evaluation and standard care, and homoeopathic treatment should not delay it.

DISCUSSION

Anxiety disorders are common, frequently chronic, and often accompanied by depression, sleep disturbance, and physical illness. Although psychotherapy and pharmacotherapy are effective, adverse effects, withdrawal symptoms, and variable compliance with medication leave scope for complementary approaches.[1,5] Homoeopathy emphasizes individualization, considering the nature of the anxiety, its triggers, emotional responses, personality, fears, and associated physical symptoms, so that remedy selection follows the totality of symptoms rather than the diagnostic label alone.[6,7] The remedies described in this review illustrate this principle. At the same time, the variability of study methodologies and the difficulty of standardizing individualized prescriptions mean that high-quality clinical research is still needed.

CONCLUSION

Anxiety disorders have emerged as a major mental health concern in the modern era due to increasing psychological, social, and technological stressors. Their impact extends beyond emotional suffering, affecting physical health, social functioning, and quality of life. Homoeopathy offers a holistic and individualized therapeutic approach that aims to address the unique mental, emotional, and physical characteristics of each patient. Through constitutional prescribing and careful case analysis, homoeopathic therapeutics may play a complementary role in the management of anxiety disorders. An integrated approach combining lifestyle modification, psychological support, and individualized homoeopathic treatment can contribute to comprehensive patient care and improved overall well-being.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors acknowledge the researchers and authors whose published works were consulted during the preparation of this review article.

ETHICAL APPROVAL

Not applicable. This article is a review of previously published literature and did not involve human participants, animals, or identifiable patient data.

FUNDING DISCLOSURE

No financial support or funding was received for the preparation, writing, or publication of this review article.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this article.

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How to cite this article: Alpana Choudhary, Rituraj. Anxiety Disorders in the Modern Era: Scope of Homoeopathic Therapeutics. *Nat J. Med. Res. Yoga Sci.*, 2026; 3 (4): 18-20

Source of Support: Nil, **Conflicts of Interest:** None declared.