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Natural, Non-toxic Treatments for Stress, Anxiety, Depression, and Insomnia

In the era of TV advertising for medications we often see depiction of the miraculous ability to solve many of life's difficulties by taking the newest pill on the market. We see the depressed person suddenly happy and productive. We see the insomniac sleep like a baby. And generally, we are given the feeling that simply popping that newest medication will allow us to be our real selves, productive, and overall greatly improved in our lives.

Certainly reality may not be as simple as the commercials portray. There are side effects from these medications, and their effectiveness may not be as rosy as hoped for. We are told that the sleep medications are not addicting, but then for some reason are advised to take them just for short periods of time. Often, the reality is that the patient returns to the doctor asking for another prescription again, and again, and cannot sleep without the "little pill." When patients who have been on antidepressant or anti-anxiety medication for a period of time try to get off the medication, they have side effects. The side effects may simply be a function of the medication being withdrawn, but that is often interpreted by both the patient and the doctor as evidence that the patient still needs to take the medication. Thus, the patient does not get off the medication. Often, when the results are not what are hoped for, the next step is prescribing a higher dose of the medication or a second medication to take along with the first one. Of course, the likelihood of side effects increases with higher doses or multiple medications. For those who wish to avoid these scenarios, it is important to understand that there are nutrients and other non-toxic treatments which may be able to accomplish what one is looking for in terms of feeling better without risking side effects or dependencies.

Amino Acids are the building blocks for proteins, hormones and neurotransmitters. Neurotransmitters are naturally occurring substances, which are secreted between brain cells and are needed for sending information through the brain and nervous system. Serotonin is a neurotransmitter. The major antidepressant medications were developed to enhance the amount of serotonin between the neurons (brain cells) to relieve the symptoms of depression/ anxiety. An important problem found with the use of these medications is that over time the natural level of neurotransmitters may diminish and the original dose of the medication is found to stop working as well.

As a result, the patient either gets a higher dose or a second medication, or because of side effects the physician may resort to trying another medication. Patients are told that the problem is their depression. If the true underlying problem is a depletion of neurotransmitters by their medication, that should be the problem which is addressed. The amino acid 5-Hydroxytryptophan is converted to serotonin. L-Cysteine and L-tyrosine are amino acids, which are converted into the neurotransmitters, known as catecholamines.

By using these amino acids with the help of other nutrients, patients can be treated without medication. Information taken from numerous studies and a database of thousands of people supports the view that the proper amino acids will treat not only depression/anxiety states but many other conditions as well. This mind body connection may show itself to be helpful for headaches, PMS, irritable bowel and other stress-related issues. 5-Hydroxytryptophan (5-HTP) taken with L-Cysteine and L-tyrosine, as well as the Amino Acid GABA and other nutrients, allows many patients to get off anti-depressants or avoid them altogether. Vitamins B6, C, Calcium, Magnesium, are accessory factors working with these amino acids for optimal neurochemical balance. One piece of good news is that these nutrients can be taken while taking medications. A patient does not have to choose between taking their medication and trying the nutrient program. We observe the response to the nutrients while medication is still being taken, and then withdrawing the medication slowly as the patient improves.

In medicine today, doctors and their patients are “flying blind” because no testing is done. Antidepressant/anti-anxiety medications are prescribed without any knowledge of the actual levels of neurotransmitters the medication is working on. By testing a urine sample for the neurotransmitters, serotonin, dopamine, epinephrine, norepinephrine, GABA, we can have helpful information for tailoring the treatment to each individual. Other amino acids, those which are called the body’s “essential Amino acids,” can also be profiled and help these conditions and others as well.

An important non toxic treatment of note utilizes electromedicine.

Electromedicine involves the use of a hand-held device which provides Cranial Electrotherapy Stimulation. This device produces tiny electrical currents similar to the electrical currents naturally produced in the brain. The device is hooked up to the person’s earlobes. A little bit of a “tingling” sensation in the earlobes is felt as the machine provides its electro-stimulation while it is being used for 20 minutes to an hour daily. There are over 125 human studies of Cranial electrotherapy, and it has been shown to be effective in a variety of conditions, such as anxiety, insomnia, and depression.

Dr. Sobo is a Medical Doctor practicing Holistic/ Nutritional Medicine in Stamford, CT. More information about natural hormones and about Dr. Sobo's practice can be found on the Internet at <http://drsobo.com>. Dr. Sobo's office phone number is 203-348-8805.

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