Anxiety, ADD, or Intelligence

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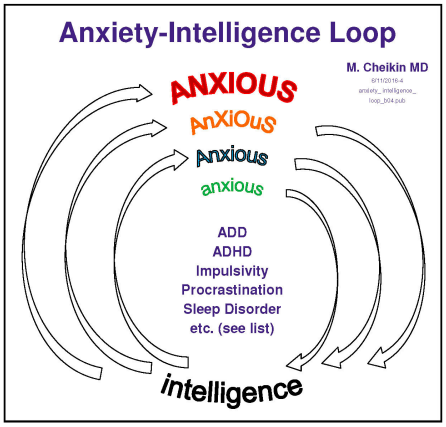
A son and daughter are both diagnosed with ADD before the age of 10. The son is more hyperkinetic, the daughter takes forever to complete any task and is distracted in school. The mother's mother is chronically on anxiety medications. The father has mild anxiety but no family history. All family members are highly intelligent. Medications, therapy, exercise, and "going gluten free" has helped. What to conclude, where to go?



Symptoms and Intelligence

Current medical terminology has created a lexicon of mental descriptors, but they are just that, descriptions. Five children with anxiety or ADD can have ten or more behavioral patterns, each child's pattern changing with circumstance. So, lumping them all into one ICD-10 code or using one class of medication to solve all their problems is inherently flawed.

A symptom is an unpleasant experience, while anxiety is an unpleasant emotion featuring fear or worry without clear cause. ADD/ADHD is a complex with impulsivity, problems concentrating and excessive motion, often not directly bothersome to the patient. Other symptoms of anxiety, as listed, can be misinterpreted and mis-diagnosed.

Intelligence is the ability to see patterns and to learn. However, intelligence (or will power) cannot control emotion or behavior during times of high anxiety. The emotional system, focused on survival, is triggered by ancient programming to abruptly commandeer behavior and looks like impulsivity and aggression (fight), avoiding (flight); and/or procrastination (freezing), with rumination, guilt, rationalization and stuckness. Intelligence can fuel rather than quench the fire of anxiety and ADD. The internet and the news can be suffocating rather than empowering.

Symptoms of Anxiety
Anxiety
Impulsivity
Hypervigilance
Panic Attacks
Paranoia
Phobias
Hoarding
"Neurotic" Feelings & Behaviors
Poor Concentration
Impaired Memory
Hyperkinesis
Addictions
Self-Stimulation (Nail Biting, Picking)
Sleep Disorder
OCD
Tics
Oppositionality
Hypochondriasis

Neurochemistry

Anxiety is a mental phenomena which cannot be directly measured. However, if mind is "software", "hardware" is the brain wiring and chemistry, which can be measured and altered.

The neuro-chemistry of anxiety overlaps with that of attention and intelligence. If one is born intelligent, like being gifted a Corvette, one must maintain the hardware with higher quality materials or deal with a mis-firing engine. With improper care, the assets of the machine are turned into deficits. Such misfiring often looks like anxiety or ADHD.

Neuro-transmitters, the molecules that brain cells send and receive to transmit information come in over 100 varieties. It is the balance of these chemicals that affect and reflect our mood, level of arousal, focus and ability to learn. They affect every system of the body (immune, gut, etc.) and are in turn affected by every system of the body.

The "gut-brain connection" is quite intimate; for example, most serotonin for the body is manufactured by the gut, and then transported elsewhere for use. Mainstream research has proven that a dysfunctional gut can be a major factor in brain dysfunctions of many types, including autism. Our levels of anxiety and arousal, like weight, have setpoint that are more nurture and pre-natal experience than nature.

Genetic Tendency

Families not only share genes, they also share foods, toxins, ecology, epigenes and enzymes that transport essential nutrients such as zinc. Shared malabsorption, deficiency and infections, such as when parents and children share sinus, fungal and other infections, can alter neuro-chemistry and contribute to anxiety and ADD. Shared strains of bacteria, yeast, and other microbes can be corrected with specific supplementations at levels unique to the family.

Conventional and Holistic Approaches

Medications can work in the short-term, but with long-term risks of addiction and recidivism. Stressors of many types can trigger or make any symptoms worse. Therapy can identify and manage such stressors to a certain degree.

Root causes of brain dysfunction include deficiencies of omega-3 oils, B-vitamins, iodine, lithium, sleep disorder; toxicities with mercury, lead, fluoride, bromide, certain vaccines and/or "organic" pollutants that come from petroleum, plastics, pesticides, preservatives and pharmaceuticals; brain infections with Lyme, other spirochetes, strep infections (PANDAS syndrome); and stressors such as head traumas (soccer), recreational substances, and emotional abuse. Looking for the root cause of these brain disorders requires a holistic approach.

Not only does the mind direct the body, the body directs the mind--a concept integral to alternative medicine. By changing the body, physically, through methods such as exercise and massage, chemically, with foods, eliminations and individualized supplements, and energetically with methods such as yoga and acupuncture, the mind can be re-balanced and eventually re-set with many improvements.

IMPORTANT NOTES:

1. **This educational material may not be used to influence medical care without supervision by a licensed practitioner.**
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3. Dr. Cheikin's website has related articles and references such as “Neurotransmitters”, “Yoga and Kids' Brains” and others.

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