

Obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD)

Vocabulary:

obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD): **trastorno obsesivo-compulsivo (TOC)**

anxiety disorder: **trastorno de ansiedad**

cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT): **terapia cognitivo-conductual (TCC)**

selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs): **inhibidores selectivos da recaptación da serotonina (ISRS)**

Obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) is an anxiety disorder characterized by intrusive thoughts that produce apprehension, fear or worry (obsessions) and by repetitive behaviour aimed at reducing the associated anxiety (compulsions).

Obsessions are thoughts that recur and persist despite efforts to ignore or confront them. Common obsessions include fears about germs and contamination; fears of acting out violent or aggressive thoughts or impulses; unreasonable fears of harming others, especially loved ones; abhorrent, blasphemous or sexual thoughts and fears that things are not safe, (e.g. household appliances).

Compulsions are repeated tasks that sufferers frequently perform tasks to seek relief from obsession-related anxiety. Some common compulsions include, for example, repeated hand-washing, making sure certain items are in a straight line, repeatedly checking parked cars are locked before leaving them, turning lights on and off, touching objects a certain number of times before leaving a room, etc..

OCD is estimated to affect as many as 12 in every 1000 people (1.2% of the population), ranging from young children to adults. Approximately 50% of all cases fall into the severe category, with less than a quarter classed as mild. The World Health Organisation (WHO) has ranked OCD in the top ten of the most disabling illnesses of any kind, in terms of lost earnings and diminished quality of life.

There are two main treatments for OCD: Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) and Anti-Obsessional Medication. Medication include selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs), including fluoxetine, better known as Prozac. The technique used in CBT is called exposure and ritual prevention, which involves gradually learning to tolerate the anxiety associated with not performing the ritual behaviour.

Research has shown that approximately 75-80% of people who participate in CBT will achieve substantial relief from their OCD symptoms. Many patients find that as they master CBT techniques, they can gradually reduce or stop medication.

Generally it's best to learn the ropes from an experienced therapist. Once one has had practice, you can, in essence, eventually become your own therapist. Actually, the majority of your therapy takes place when you leave your therapist's office and go out in the real world to practice what you have learned. The more practice in real life, the quicker you will improve.

Thank you very much for inviting me and for your warm Spanish hospitality.