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BODY DYSMORPHIC DISORDER

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ABSTRACT

Definition: The literal meaning of Body dysmorphic disorder is “misshapeness or ugliness.” The term is applied to those individuals who are preoccupied with their appearance. **Types:** There are two types of BDD, Muscle Dysmorphia and Body Dysmorphic Disorder by Proxy. **Causes:** Negative experience and some personality traits contribute to BDD. **Symptoms:** More concern about the appearance, Depression, Low self-esteem. **Treatment:** Treatment of body dysmorphic disorder may include cognitive behavioral therapy and medication.

Key words: Body dysmorphic disorder, BDD, Cognitive Behavioral therapy, Low self-esteem

INTRODUCTION

Body dysmorphic disorder (BDD), also known as dysmorphophobia is a common and severe mental disorder where a person spends a lot of time worrying about flaws in their appearance which is not noticed by others. An Italian physician Enrico Morselli first described this in 1891. The term ‘Dysmorphia’ was derived from a Greek word meaning misshapeness or ugliness. In reality they look normal but they perceive to be ugly or deformed. They spend hours a day to fix it. People feel so embarrassed, ashamed and anxious that they may avoid many social situations and it may cause distress. This also causes cognitive dysfunction. The American Psychiatric Association has classified Body Dysmorphic Disorder as a somatoform disorder in 1987. Nearly 1.7% to 2.9% of the general population is affected. BDD most often begins in adolescence or young adulthood. It is more common in women than men.

Definition:

A mental condition characterized by exaggerated belief that the body is deformed or defective in some specific way leading to distress and impairment of social and occupational functioning.

The common complaints involve imagined or slight flaws of the face or head, such as thinning hair, acne, wrinkles, scars, facial swelling, excessive facial hair

Types:

There are two sub types of BDD:

- Muscle Dysmorphia (MD): It is associated with a number of thoughts and a belief about one’s

self and others, including beliefs that one's body is not sufficiently muscular and large enough or belief that others negatively evaluate their appearance.

- Body Dysmorphic Disorder by Proxy: It is a variation of BDD in which an individual is overly concerned with perceived imperfections with another person's appearance.

Causes:

There is no single known cause of BDD, but there are several risk factors that may contribute to its development. These include:

- Genetics: If the first-degree relatives are affected with any mental illness, there are chances for developing this disorder.
- Negative experiences: Abuse, bullying or criticism about the appearance leads to negative self-image causing this condition.
- Low Self-Esteem: The physical flaws cause low self-esteem. The always compare with others and thus develops BDD
- Perfectionism: Exposure to media and to look smart contribute to the development of BDD
- Cultural Influences: Culture also plays a major role with different standards of beauty and appearance.

Symptoms:

- Obsessed that there is something wrong with how they look
- More concern about face and head.
- High levels of perceived stress
- Poor insight
- A majority have ideas or delusions of reference, thinking that others take special notice of the 'defect', perhaps staring at it, talking about it, or mocking it.
- Repetitive, compulsive behaviors aimed at improving, or hiding the 'defect'
- Compares the appearance with others
- Frequently taking to check the appearance, or using apps/photo filters to change the appearance.
- Avoiding social situations
- Feeling shameful
- Impaired interpersonal relationship
- Impaired academic and occupational functioning
- Low self esteem
- Undergoes cosmetic surgeries to fix the appearance.

Body Dysmorphic Disorder and Mental Health

BDD affects the mental health of a person. It leads to

- Major Depression
- Fear and anxiety
- Social phobia
- Eating disorders especially Anorexia nervosa
- Substance abuse
- Obsessive compulsory disorder
- Personality disorder especially avoidant personality
- Suicide

Treatment:

BDD is difficult to cure but it can be treated.

- Currently Serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SRIs) and cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) are in use and considered as the treatment of choice. It helps to connect between the thoughts, feelings and behaviors.

CBT helps to change the attitude towards body image and bring down the compulsive behaviors.

SSRI reduces the obsessive thoughts and behaviors.

- Talk therapy is also the best to replace the negative thoughts with the positive one.
- Family therapy is good since family members are often impacted by the symptoms and they too play a role in the treatment process.

CONCLUSION

BDD is a chronic disorder which impairs a person's normal functioning. The person worries about the perceived or small defect in their appearance. Mostly people fail to come for the treatment because of their appearance. It should be diagnosed and treated since it affects all the functions.

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