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Sleep disturbances: Assessment and treatment of sleep issues in anxious clients**Catherine M Pittman***Saint Mary's College, USA*

Statement of the Problem: Sleep disturbances are common among many individuals, but when clients with anxiety are suffering from sleep difficulties, special interventions are required. Clients with anxiety disorders are at greater risk for sleep difficulties, and their difficulties worsen their anxiety symptoms. Further, a specific stage of sleep (i.e, REM sleep) has been shown to have a clear relationship with anxiety symptoms, and should be prioritized in treatment. **Methodology & Theoretical Orientation:** Research has revealed the neurological mechanisms that create anxiety and provided evidence for the effectiveness of a variety of interventions for the treatment of anxiety. Understanding the relationship between sleep difficulties and the neural mechanisms of anxiety points the way to more effective interventions for sleep disturbances in individuals with anxiety-based disorders, including PTSD and OCD. Hormones associated with the sympathetic nervous system have been indicated as interfering with sleep effectiveness. **Conclusions and Recommendations:** Assessment of the specific sleep difficulties and relevant factors is essential in treating sleep difficulties in anxious individuals. Instruments that are useful in assessing these difficulties and relevant factors will be presented, and made available to participants. Both the amygdala and the cortex need to be targeted in sleep intervention. Strategies that lead to more healthy sleep will be presented, with a focus on achieving the ability to get enough sleep to experience sufficient REM sleep to prevent the amygdala from interfering with sleep. **Conclusion & Significance:** We know the neural mechanisms and hormones that influence sleep difficulties, and we have evidence-based strategies that will increase the likelihood of clients experiencing healthy sleep experiences. Evidenced-based strategies including CBT for Insomnia will be presented. In addition, effects of alcohol, sleep medications, and marijuana will be addressed.

Biography

Catherine Pittman, Ph.D., HSPP, a licensed clinical psychologist, and professor at Saint Mary's College in Notre Dame, IN. USA, has treated anxiety for over 30 years, and is experienced in neuropsychological rehabilitation with individuals with brain injuries or strokes. In 2019, she was honored by Rehabilitation Hospital of Indiana with a Service Award for her work in treating brain injury. She conducted research in both fear conditioning and neuropsychology, preparing her well to explain the neurology of fear and anxiety. She authored *Rewire Your Anxious Brain*, recognized for its clear explanation of how to change both the amygdala and cortex in order to make the brain more resistant to anxiety. She also wrote *Rewire Your OCD Brain* with neuropsychologist William Youngs and *50 Ways to Rewire Your Anxious Brain* with Maha Zayed Hoffman. Her most recent book on overcoming anxiety is titled *Taming Your Amygdala*, published by PESI.