

Claustrophobia

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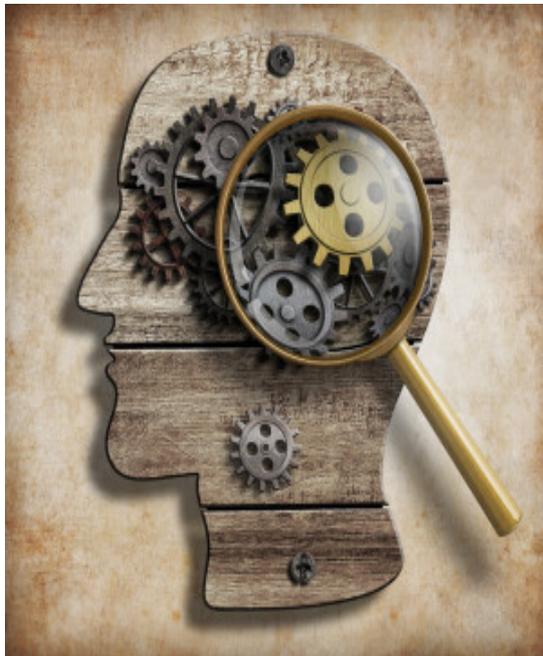
What is it?

Claustrophobia which is also a type of anxiety disorder is the fear of being in a small or enclosed space. It is classified as an unreasonable fear of an object or a specific phobia towards a situation. Claustrophobia can interfere with daily life and overall functioning as it can trigger panic or anxiety attacks.



<https://makeadifference567.wordpress.com/2016/09/28/claustrophobia-by-ahmed->

why does it occur?



<http://www.itworks-inc.com/2016/03/02/why-sponsored-research-is-important-to-the-advancement-of-society/>

- ❖ The main cause of claustrophobia is linked with the **dysfunction of the amygdala** which is responsible with how we process fear.
- ❖ claustrophobia may also be caused due to a **traumatic event**. The events include: being locked in a small space due to some punishment, stuck in a tight or crowded space for a long period of time, being locked in a closet due to some accident.
- ❖ Few researches also illustrates that claustrophobia can also be due to a **genetic cause**, if a family member or parent is claustrophobic, their child may begin to associate fear and anxiety with familiar situations.

Signs and symptoms?



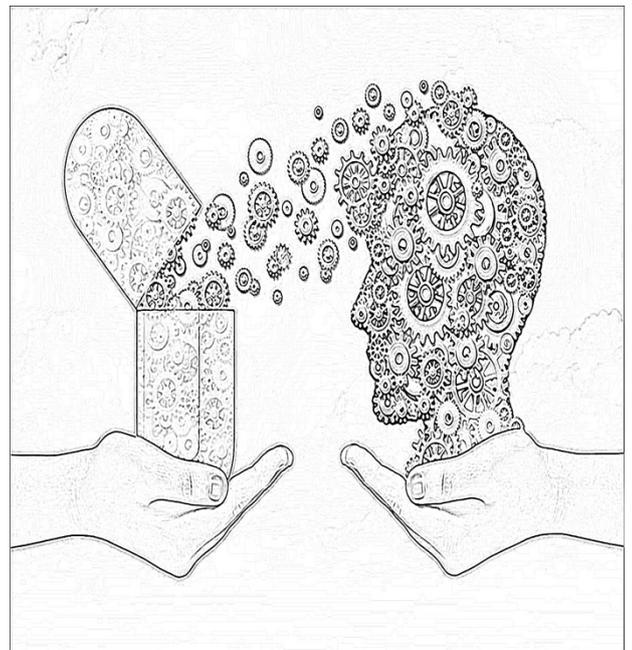
<http://www.nimshospital.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Phobias->

Treatments

- ❖ **Modelling:** It was found that if the person watches another person undergo the thing that triggers the phobia, the person would feel encouraged to do so automatically.
- ❖ **Cognitive behaviour therapy:** The person would undergo therapy to alter the thoughts and feelings that cause the fear.
- ❖ **Flooding:** also, known as exposure treatment, when a person is exposed to their phobia frequently, the anxiety attacks reduces and passes in time.
- ❖ **Rational emotive behaviour therapy (REBT):** This therapy addresses the attitudes, emotions and behaviours and help people alter and develop healthy and realistic beliefs.
- ❖ **Medications** such as antidepressants and tranquillisers may be helpful in some cases when prescribed by the doctors.

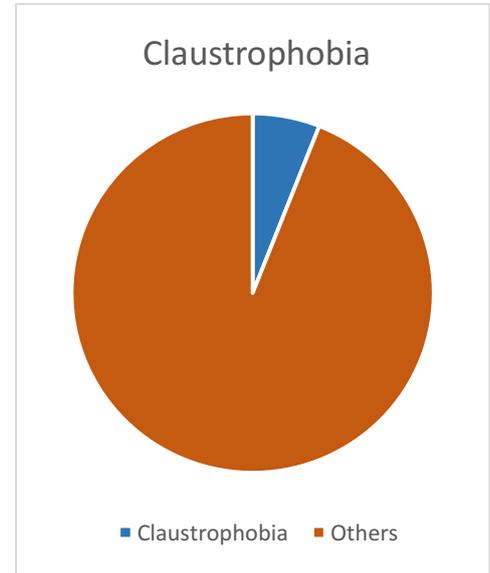
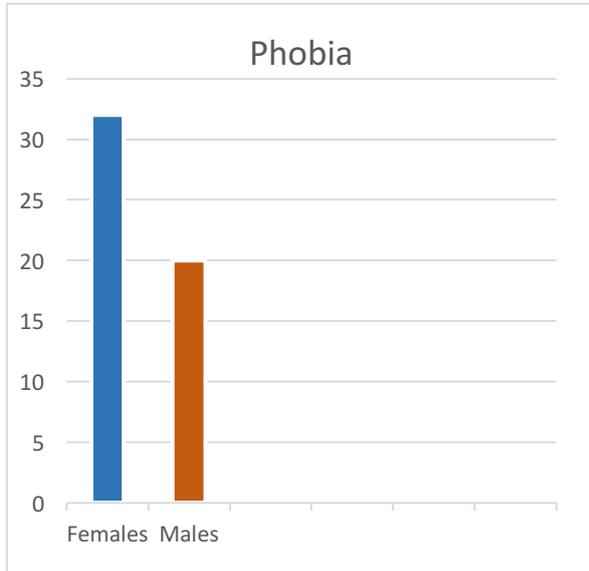
When a person is placed in an enclosed space and are claustrophobic, they may show signs such as:

- ❖ Automatically checking for the exits.
- ❖ Avoiding heavy traffic when inside a vehicle.
- ❖ Prefer taking stairs than the lift.
- ❖ Stand near the door regardless of the size and people in the room.
- ❖ Feelings of panic may arise when the door is closed.
- ❖ Depression: when a person is undergoing depressive disorders such as social phobia or panic disorder, they are more vulnerable to claustrophobia.



<https://psychcentral.com/disorders/bipolar/bipolar-disorder-causes/>

Statistics in Australia



As anticipated from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2007), **six** percent of Australian adults are diagnosed with a fear that prevents them from carrying out their day to day activities smoothly. Phobia is one of the types of anxiety disorders. It was demonstrated that the occurrence of phobia is more likely to appear in females (32%) as opposed to males (20%).

When to see a doctor?

- ❖ When one becomes too worrisome and it interferes with their day to day activities.
- ❖ When the fear is distressing oneself, and is hard to control.
- ❖ When one turns to using alcohol or drugs to cope.
- ❖ When one is experiencing suicidal thoughts, or have signs performing suicidal behaviour.





Frequently Asked Questions

1. How do you differentiate normal fear and phobia?

Fear is defined as an emotional response to an imminent threat while phobia is a type of anxiety disorder that develops and lasts for about six months or a life time. A phobia produces the reaction of a fear or anxiety and disrupts people from carrying out their daily activities.

2. How to self-manage claustrophobia?

There are techniques that one can try so that they would not feel too overwhelmed. Techniques such as breathing techniques, physical relaxing techniques by relaxing one's shoulders, eyes and face and thinking techniques that involve self-talk for reassurance and chat with other people as a means of distraction.

3. Is claustrophobia curable?

Yes, there are situations where claustrophobia is successfully treated and cured through the use of exposure techniques. It was also found that combining exposure techniques and other treatment methods such as the cognitive behavior therapy quickens the treatment process. Moreover, using virtual reality as an exposure therapy is widely encouraged in this new era of technology.

4. How to feel relieve from MRI claustrophobia?

When a claustrophobic patient is undergoing an MRI scan, it would be wise to notify the staff about one's condition. There are times where the staff would be able to give the patient a mild sedative or advise a consultation with the GP for other prescriptions. In some private clinics, the patient may be able to attend an upright or open MRI Centre which is created for people undergoing phobia and severe anxiety.

5. What triggers claustrophobia?

The common triggers of claustrophobia are planes, lifts, tunnels, tube trains, hotel rooms with sealed windows shop changing rooms, car washes, public toilets and revolving doors.



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