

Cross-cultural Psychiatry

Culture-specific disorders

Amok (Indonesia, Malaysia)

- An indiscriminate, seemingly unprovoked, episode of homicidal or highly destructive behaviour, followed by amnesia or fatigue. Many episodes culminate in suicide. Most events occur without warning, although some are precipitated by a period of intense anxiety or hostility
- tends to occur in Malayan men
- uncommon now – the most common underlying diagnosis is schizophrenia, with depression, acute brain syndrome, and hysterical dissociation occurring in some cases

Suggested ICD-10 code

F68.8 Other specific disorders of adult personality and behaviour

Dhat, dhatu, jiryan, shenk'uei, shen-kui (India, China)

- Anxiety and somatic complaints such as fatigue and muscle pain, related to a fear of semen loss in men or women (also thought to secrete semen). Precursors are said to include excess coitus, urinary disorders, imbalances in body humours and diet.
- patients are typically:
 - from a rural area
 - from a family with a conservative attitude towards sex
 - average or low socioeconomic status
- literacy and religion are unimportant; most sufferers are literate

Epidemiology

- age of presentation is in early 20s
- half are unmarried

Management

- although there is a relative absence of anxiety and depression, most respond to anti-anxiety or antidepressant drugs

Suggested ICD-10 code

F48.8 Other specified neurotic disorders

F45.34 Somatoform autonomic dysfunction of the genitourinary system

Koro, jinjin bemar, suk yeong, suo-yang (Southeast Asia, south China, India)

- Acute pain or anxiety reaction involving fear of genital retraction. In severe cases, men become convinced that the penis will suddenly withdraw into the abdomen; women sense that their breasts, labia or vulva will retract. Victims expect the

consequences to be fatal. Studies cite factors such as illness, exposure to cold or excess coitus as precursors. Onset is rapid, intense and unexpected.

Suggested ICD-10 code

F48.8 Other specified neurotic disorders

F45.34 Somatoform autonomic dysfunction of the genitourinary system

Latah (Indonesia, Malaysia)

- tends to occur in Malayan women
- highly exaggerated responses to a fright or trauma, followed by:
 - involuntary echolalia
 - echopraxia
 - trance-like states
 - automatic obedience
 - coprolalia
- may be one form of the 'hyperstartle reaction' and is therefore universally found

Suggested ICD-10 code

F48.8 Other specified neurotic disorders

F44.88 Other specified dissociative (conversion) disorders

Nerfiza, nerves, nevra, nervios (Egypt, northern Europe, Greece, Mexico, Central and South America)

- Common, often chronic, episodes of extreme sorrow or anxiety, inducing a complex of somatic complaints such as head and muscle pain, diminished reactivity, nausea, appetite loss, insomnia, fatigue and agitation. The syndrome is more common in women than in men.

Suggested ICD-10 code

- F32.11 Moderate depressive episode with somatic syndrome
- F48.0 Neurasthenia
- F45.1 Undifferentiated somatoform disorder

Pa-leng, frigophobia (China, southeast Asia)

- Anxiety state characterized by obsessive fear of cold and winds, believed to produce fatigue, impotence or death. Victims compulsively dress in heavy or excessive clothing.

Suggested ICD-10 code

F40.2 Specific phobias

Pibloktoq, Arctic hysteria (Inuits living within the Arctic Circle)

- Prodromal fatigue, depression or confusion followed by a ‘seizure’ of disruptive behaviour, including stripping or tearing off clothes, frenzied running, rolling in snow, glossolalia or echolalia, echopraxia, property destruction and coprophagia. Most episodes last only minutes and are followed by loss of consciousness, amnesia and complete remission

Suggested ICD-10 code

F44.7 Mixed dissociative (conversion) disorders

F44.88 Other specified dissociative (conversion) disorders

Susto, espanto (Mexico, Central and South America)

- Highly diverse, chronic complaints attributed to ‘soul loss’ induced by a severe, often supernatural, fright. In some cases, individuals may be stricken when others suffer a fright. Symptoms often include agitation, anorexia, insomnia, fever, diarrhoea, mental confusion and apathy, depression and introversion

Suggested ICD-10 code

F45.1 Undifferentiated somatoform disorder

F48.8 Other specified neurotic disorder

Taijin kyofusho, shinkeishitsu, anthropophobia (Japan)

- Anxiety or phobia more common among men and young adults. Cases are marked by a fear of social contact, extreme self-consciousness, and a fear of contracting disease. Somatic symptoms include head, body and stomach aches, fatigue and insomnia

Suggested ICD-10 code

F40.1 Social phobia

F40.8 Other phobic anxiety disorders

Ufufuyane, saka (southern Africa)

- An anxiety state popularly attributed to magical potions administered by rejected lovers, or spirit possession. Features include shouting, sobbing, repeated neologisms, paralysis, convulsions and a trance-like stupor or loss of consciousness. Most victims are young unmarried women. Some experience nightmares with sexual themes or rare episodes of temporary blindness. Attacks, which can continue for days or weeks, may be provoked by the sight of men or foreigners.

Suggested ICD-10 code

F44.3 Trance and possession disorders

F44.7 Mixed dissociative (conversion) disorders

Uqamairineq (Inuits living within the Arctic Circle)

- Sudden paralysis associated with borderline sleep states, accompanied by anxiety, agitation or hallucinations. Prodromal indicators may include a detectable yet transient sound or smell. Although the condition is usually chronic and can prompt panic, most attacks last only minutes and are followed by complete remission. Cases are fairly common and traditionally alleged to result from soul loss, soul wandering or spirit possession.

Suggested ICD-10 code

F44.88 Other Specified dissociative (conversion) disorders

G47.4 Narcolepsy and cataplexy

includes : sleep paralysis

Windigo (indigenous people of northeastern regions of North America)

- Rare, historic accounts of cannibalistic obsession. Symptoms include depression, homicidal or suicidal thoughts, and a delusional compulsive wish to eat human flesh.
- The available information is too unreliable to suggest a likely code – although it has been ascribed to major depression or schizophrenia

Brain fag syndrome (many parts of Africa, New Guinea)

- a low grade stress symptom, commonly encountered among students
- five symptom types have been described:
 - head symptoms – aching, burning, crawling sensations
 - eye symptoms – blurring, watering, aching
 - difficulty grasping the meaning of spoken or written words
 - poor retentivity
 - sleepiness on studying
- rates highest in rural areas
- sufferers are resistant to psychological interpretation of their condition
- may be a form of depression in which depressive features are not articulated in Western psychological terms

Psychiatry and ethnic minorities in Britain

Mental illness among ethnic minorities

Schizophrenia

- higher than expected rates in Afro-Caribbean people born in Britain
 - highest rates in UK-born second-generation subjects
- misdiagnosis does not seem to explain the nine-fold increase in rates within this group
- there is no evidence (from studies in the West Indies) that Afro-Caribbeans have a greater genetic loading for schizophrenia

Suicide

- high rates among young Indian women, but low in Indian men
- low in Caribbean men and women
- immigrant groups have a higher rate of suicide by burning, with a nine-fold excess among Indian women
 - the common causes include marital problems, and interpersonal difficulties with other family members
 - lower rates in older Indian women, perhaps due to the greater respect given to them because of their age

Child and adolescent psychiatric presentations

- psychotic and autistic disorders are over-represented in Afro-Caribbean children
- autistic children of immigrant parents are more likely than their white counterparts to be severely or profoundly mentally handicapped
- mental handicap is over-represented in Afro-Caribbeans
- conduct disorder has higher, and emotional disorder has lower rates in Afro-Caribbeans