

Natural Help 4...

Hysteria



What is Hysteria?

Hysteria is a somewhat controversial and outdated term, the meaning of which has been adapted and changed over time.

While the term Hysteria is seldom used in reference to a medical condition today, the concept still remains and what was once **the diagnosable condition Hysteria disorder is now more acceptably know as a somatization disorder** or histrionic personality disorder.

Diagnosing Hysteria

The medical use of the term Hysteria has slowly been discontinued and it is no longer considered a diagnosable condition. There are however **a number of psychological ailments that have replaced the core ideas behind the original concept of Hysteria**.

While it has been established that the term Hysteria is dated and no longer used on a medical level, it is still commonly used in everyday conversation. We often hear about someone who was crying hysterically or has had a hysterical outburst.

In this sense of the word, hysteria is used to describe **extreme anxiety, outrage or anger and loss of self-control**. This is often seen after severe trauma, or during a moment of panic or extreme stress. **Hysteria symptoms** often resemble those of a panic attack as the individual is over-whelmed by a physical reaction that is triggered by an emotional event.

Symptoms of Hysteria

- Hysterical convulsions (fits)
- Sensory disturbances such as tunnel vision, dulled or heightened senses
- Pounding heart
- Hyperventilation or shortness of breath
- Trembling or shaking
- Dizziness or feeling like you're going to faint
- Feelings of unreality or detachment
- Feelings of losing control

Parents may even recognize **hysteria symptoms** in children after extreme tantrums or in excessively upset or traumatized children who are very difficult to calm down.

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Never disregard professional medical advice or delay in seeking it because of something you have read in this ebook or on ANY website.

A thorough assessment is recommended during which time is spent discussing **hysteria symptoms**, feelings and concerns with a physician. It is important not to make a self-diagnosis. The first step would be to receive a full medical check-up from a physician to **make sure that there are no underlying medical causes** of the symptoms.

Hysteria treatment will be prescribed once physical health is established and all necessary tests have come back negative. Consult a psychologist or psychiatrist who will perform a full assessment and diagnose you accordingly. Remember to ask about all **hysteria treatment** options and try to research the topic so that you feel fully informed about your condition.

What is Mass Hysteria?

Mass **Hysteria** is the term used to describe the occurrence of large scale outbreaks of strange or out of the ordinary behavior. This is a puzzling phenomenon that has perplexed physicians and psychologists alike.

It is best described as **emotional** contagion, and **masses of people have been known to display the same physical and mental symptoms** during or after an event. This is common in religious festivals, riots or sports matches where one individual often instigates a behavior and the rest of the group then mimics that person's behavior.

This has often resulted in mass violence, excitement or outbreak of disease-like symptoms (without organic cause). For example, one reported case involved a school being closed and numerous children and teachers being rushed to hospital with nausea, vomiting and dizziness after a reported gas leak.

The incident started with one pupil's complaint of dizziness and an odd smell of gas from a vent. Shortly after, other people began to experience the same symptoms and many were rushed to hospital. On inspection, no gas leak was found and all symptoms suddenly disappeared.

With a mass event, **hysteria treatment** involved separating the individuals. Once the group is dispersed or the truth of the situation is revealed people quickly recover and in some cases people are left feeling totally bewildered that they acted so out of character.

What Causes Hysteria?

There are a number of psychological ailments that have replaced the core ideas behind the original concept of **hysteria disorders**, and they tend to have varied causes.

As more research has been performed on the topic, the concept of **hysteria disorders** has been divided into two types of condition, **Histrionic Personality Disorder** and **Somatization Disorders**.

Histrionic Personality Disorder

People with histrionic personality disorder often come across as attention seeking



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Michele Carelse, Clinical Psychologist



All of our natural remedies are formulated by our expert team of herbalists, naturopaths and homeopaths, and headed by Michele Carelse.

Michele has had years of experience in the manufacturing and use of natural remedies. In addition, she is a trained Clinical Psychologist and has been incorporating natural remedies into her treatment of patients with depression, anxiety, ADD, ADHD and stress for many years with spectacular results.

or overly-dramatic. They may be inclined to express their emotions in an exaggerated or theatrical manner and they are often seen as self-centered or overly concerned about their physical appearance.

While their behavior is often charming and inviting at first (as their enthusiasm and seductiveness is appealing), their relationships often remain shallow and may be short-lived once people realize their constant demand for attention and lack of authenticity. For these reasons, people with this disorder often function well socially or at work, but may have difficulties in inter-personal relationships.

The symptoms of histrionic personality disorder may include:

- Constantly seeking approval or reassurance
- Overly dramatic behavior with exaggerated expressions of emotion
- Excessive sensitivity to criticism or disapproval
- Inappropriate sexually provocative or seductive appearance or behavior
- Overly concerned with physical appearance, often using it to gain attention
- Often feels uncomfortable if not the center of attention (self-centeredness)
- Easily frustrated and expresses low tolerance for delayed gratification
- Rapidly shifting and shallow expression of emotion
- Easily influenced by others and suggestible
- Tendency to consider relationships more intimate than they are
- Tendency to make rash decisions grounded on emotional impulse
- May threaten or attempt suicide to get attention

As with other personality disorders, people with histrionic personality disorder usually only seek treatment when high stress levels or other situational factors in their lives become overwhelming and they begin to struggle with interpersonal relationships or feel that they are unable to cope.

Treatment usually does not incorporate drug therapy and is most likely to include some form of psychotherapy.

Somatization Disorder

This rare psychological disorder is characterized by a seemingly endless list of **physical complaints that do not seem to have a medical cause.** Individuals suffering from somatoform or **somatization disorder** usually have a long medical history with various trips to physicians and specialists.

However, upon medical examination, the symptoms cannot be explained by an actual illness or physical injury. The following criteria have to be met for a diagnosis of **somatization disorder**:

- A history of somatic symptoms before the age of 30 and which have extended over many years
- Pain in at least four different sites on the body (such as backache, joint pain or chest pain)
- Two gastrointestinal problems other than pain such as vomiting or diarrhea
- One sexual symptom such as low libido or erectile dysfunction
- One pseudo-neurological symptom similar to those seen in conversion disorder such as fainting, blindness, or paralysis.

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People with **somatization disorder** are often not as concerned about what the symptoms may mean, but are rather troubled by the symptoms themselves. Unlike those with hypochondriasis, who are afraid of having an illness and jump into immediate action as a symptom arises, those with **Somatization disorder** do not greatly fear being ill, but find that the symptoms are troublesome and tiring in everyday life.

Conversion Disorder

Somewhat similar to **somatization disorder**, conversion disorder is a **psychological ailment characterized by physical disabilities** such as blindness, paralysis, or speech difficulties that do not have a medical cause.

While these complaints are very real to the inflicted individual, they do not have an organic cause such as brain or nerve damage and in many cases these individuals function normally.

For example, an individual may believe that he is blind, but will avoid objects in his visual field as if he is able to see. Another may be partially paralyzed, but when urgent need arises such as in the “fight or flight response”, she may be able to move efficiently.

These people are not faking, but are totally unaware of their motor or sensory abilities. Another key aspect to conversion disorder is that these symptoms tend to follow conflicts or great stressors.

Pain Disorder

This disorder usually starts with pain that has a physical basis such as an accident or illness, but psychological factors maintain or exacerbate the pain well after physical healing has occurred.

It is important to note that while the pain may no longer have a physiological basis, it is none the less very painful and can become most debilitating.

Help for Hysteria

Treatment options ultimately depend on the specific diagnosis and severity of the disorder. In many somatoform disorders, treatment is aimed at symptom management which may include conventional drug therapies such as pain killers or OTC symptom relievers.

There are complementary and natural therapies that should be integrated with a healthy eating plan, exercise and rest for optimal effectiveness. Treatments usually deal with both **the physical symptoms as well as mental conditions** that are responsible for these symptoms.

Conventional Treatment Options

Drug therapy such as anti-depressants and anti-anxiety medication. Pain killers and other medication specific to varying symptoms may be prescribed. It must be said that certain conventional medications can cause side effects that may even



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worsen the symptoms, such as elevated heart rate or further symptoms of anxiety.

Psychotherapy or cognitive therapy can be extremely beneficial in addressing underlying emotional problems and psychological conflicts. The aim of treatment is often to apply positive thinking and learn strategies and techniques to cope with daily life. When the underlying anxieties are confronted and addressed, it no longer becomes necessary for the mind to ‘convert’ them into pain and other physical symptoms.

Natural Treatment Options

- Acupuncture
- Homeopathy and herbal remedies
- Hypnotherapy
- Massage therapy

Because somatoform disorders are usually precipitated or exacerbated by emotional stressors and anxiety, there are a number of natural herbal and homeopathic remedies that may be beneficial in treating these underlying problems.

Herbal and homeopathic ingredients such as Passion Flower, Lavender, and St. John's Wort provide much needed emotional relief and help in [staying calm](#) **without harmful sedatives.**

They can be extremely beneficial in the case of a person with a somatoform disorder, as they help to normalize body systems and gently bring about balance and harmony – with no side effects.

Used in combination with other therapeutic options, these remedies can help relieve somatic symptoms and allow a return to peace and harmony of self. Consult your doctor, naturopath, homeopath or herbalist about the remedy most appropriate to your needs.

More Information on Hysteria

People with any disorder related to [hysteria](#) generally **suffer from high stress and anxiety.** For this reason it is important that you attempt to deal with emotional issues head on and that you do your best not to “bottle” them up.

Try keeping a journal or talk out your worries as they arise with a psychologist or trusted friend. Sometimes simply the act of expressing and naming these feelings goes a long way in preventing them from manifesting physically.

Tips to Relieve Anxiety Associated with Hysteria

- **Try not to obsess about the physical symptoms** as concentrating on them only makes the matter worse. When you find yourself beginning to focus on a symptom, distract yourself somehow by going for a walk, listening to music, or doing some other involved activity.
- **Regular exercise, sufficient sleep and a healthy balanced diet** will all go a long way towards reducing anxiety and promoting a healthy body.
- **Speak openly to your family,** friends and caregivers about your

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condition so that they will be able to empathize, understand and support you.

- **Learn and research as much as possible about your diagnosis** so that you can gain a clear understanding about your condition and what you can come to expect.
- **Develop your interests!** Because many people tend to become overly identified with their symptoms, it's a good idea to find other things that give you a sense of identity and purpose. Try adopting a sport or hobby, and learn how to focus outside of yourself while keeping yourself busy.

The Natural Approach

While Western medicine has become the norm in many cultures, it is not the only treatment option. Conventional western medicine, often called allopathic medicine, is the system of medicine taught at most medical schools and most pharmaceutical and synthetic medicines are manufactured and marketed according to the principles of allopathic medicine. Allopathic medicine is also sometimes called orthodox medicine.

Because most of us in the Western world have grown up in a society in which allopathic medicine is the prevailing norm, we forget that, only a few decades ago, homeopathic, herbal and other natural medicines were commonly available – and freely used even by conventional doctors. While there are often heated debates about which system of medicine is 'better' than the other, many responsible doctors (whether they are allopathic or not) recognize that both have a role to play in the treatment program.

Natural medicine has often been frowned on by conventional doctors, especially by those who did not have sufficient knowledge of these medicines. However, it is encouraging to note that some medical schools are now beginning to re-introduce it into their course work, thereby providing doctors with a wider range of treatment options from which to choose. In many countries, especially in Europe, India and China, natural and homeopathic medicines are commonly prescribed by conventional doctors and represent a significant part of the total annual drug sales.

Naturopathy is a branch of medicine (just as allopathy is a branch of medicine) which operates according to the underlying philosophy that the body has an innate capacity to heal itself. While natural medicines are often called 'alternative' or 'complimentary' medicines, they are, in fact, a unique and independent form of medicine in their own right, well able to treat a variety of conditions. Perhaps the term 'holistic' medicine is more apt, given the broad range of treatment options and approaches which are to be found within the practice of natural medicine, which encompasses many different disciplines, including herbalism, homeopathy, iridology, osteopathy, chiropractic, therapeutic massage techniques, aromatherapy, acupuncture and many, many more.

Most naturopaths will use a variety of treatment modalities in order to treat their patients in a holistic way to support health, relieve symptoms and prevent future disease. In fact, even the World Health Organization defines health as being "... more than simply the absence of illness. It is the active state of physical, emotional, mental and social well-being." This is a wonderfully clear description of holistic or natural medicine, which strives to support health (thereby relieving or preventing symptoms), rather than simply eliminating disease.



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Although allopathic medicine certainly has a role to play and has made a tremendous contribution to medical science during the past century, there is a growing perception that it is not the only answer and that, in many cases, holistic medicine can accomplish just as much, if not more – without the risk of side effects, addiction and sacrifice to health so commonly associated with pharmaceutical drugs. Contrary to common perception, and provided that they are manufactured in the correct way, natural medicines can work quickly and safely to promote healing.

In many cases, they can succeed where pharmaceutical drugs have failed. Despite frequent reports that they are ‘unproven’ and ‘untested’, the opposite is true. Natural medicines have a long history of usage and there is a wealth of empirical evidence to support their effectiveness and safety. In addition, active clinical research is carried out by many academic hospitals and universities to support the extensive traditional and empirical evidence behind natural medicines.

It is also important to know that, like any medicine, herbal and homeopathic medicines must be manufactured in the correct way, following acceptable procedures and manufacturing methods to ensure maximum effectiveness and safety. Due to the recent rise in popularity of natural remedies, many companies have sprung up to take advantage of the market. Unfortunately not all of them are equipped to manufacture to the correct standards, often resulting in a flood of inferior (and sometimes even unsafe) remedies onto the market – giving natural remedies a bad name.

Even some pharmaceutical companies have rushed to claim their market share by producing so-called ‘standardized’ extracts of herbs and offering these as superior to the tried and tested methods of naturopathic manufacturing. Nothing could be further from the truth. While ‘standardized’ extracts may offer benefit of easy consistency of dosage (and cheaper more efficient production lines), they have grave disadvantages. These include an increase in side effects as the medicines produced in this manner lose the natural protective properties of the herbs. In some cases, these side effects have proved fatal – as was seen in the liver toxicity associated with standardized extracts of kava kava, a herb previously safely used for generations without any known side effects.

Most naturopaths recommend what is called the Full Spectrum Method of extraction – which retains the benefits of ALL the active ingredients within the herb as opposed to isolating only one – thereby providing a more complete treatment as well as superior protection against side effects.

Whatever your choice, always choose wisely. Research what is best for you. If you have a chronic or life threatening condition, don’t make changes without first discussing them with your doctor in order that your condition may be monitored. Well informed and supportive practitioners will support patients who want to take responsibility for their own health.

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