Obsessive Compulsive Disorder and Nutrition

by
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I see the phenomenon of Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD) in terms of underlying metabolic disorders that can be treated without recourse to drugs.

OCD can be described as a cluster of symptoms that compels a person to act or think in repetitive ways. The person may be afflicted with compulsive thoughts or possessed with fear of contamination by bugs. This would result in him/her having to wash their hands over an over again. Others are compelled to make sure that water taps have been properly closed or things are in their correct place. It has features in common with what is often called "perfectionism". This has inevitable consequences to one's self-image subjected to an obsession that "I am not good enough!". This may extend to a diagnosis of *Body Dys-morphic Disorder*, where the person is obsessed about a perceived imperfection of one's body or bodily functions. Another common symptom is repetitive thoughts of aggression and violence or wanting to harm people. Symptoms of OCD may vary over time depending on the popular notions of what constitutes obsessive thoughts. But there seems to be a common element of stress that can not be related to the environment.

OCD seems to be caused by excess secretion of <u>adrenaline</u>, the fight/flight hormone, from an internal origin. Adrenaline is also the focusing hormone, because in case of danger you cannot take your eyes away from the enemy (tiger). Thus it forces you to focus on things. Hence excess adrenaline production can result in Obsessive Thoughts and Compulsive Behaviours of the kind of "making sure behaviour". Like compulsively making sure that you have closed the door properly or making sure that you have not caught a bug and compulsively washing your hands. Making sure you breath fresh air etc.

Hallucinations and Delusions

Understanding the psychological consequences of OCD could lead us to suspect that the generation of stress hormones can also create the fearful imageries experienced by people suffering from psychotic episodes - during periods of stress - as in schizophrenia. Being suddenly bombarded with endogenous stress hormones - such as cortisol and adrenaline - the mind appears to create images and ideas that fits the strange inner experience of panic and fear. Hence, hallucinations and delusions can make sense to otherwise incomprehensible events.

The activation of the <u>Sympathetic Nervous System</u> (SNS) by adrenaline prepares your body for strenuous action in face of danger in the environment. But if the SNS is activated by an internal biological mechanism due to a biological disorder, there is no external enemy or stimulus. So you have to make one up to give you some sort of rational explanation of why you feel the way you do. This is at the root of delusions and hallucinations, where the mind invents causes for abnormal psychological experiences as a result of internal biochemical imbalances.

Some of these weird and varied "psychological" and physical symptoms are explained in <u>Anxiety and the Sympathetic Nervous System.</u>

OCD is a sub-class of anxiety attacks. Both OCD and anxiety attacks are marked by excess adrenaline production that can easily be tested by medical tests, such as the test for hypoglycemia as explained here.

It can also be tested with a paper-and-pencil test such as The Nutrition-Behavior Inventory questionnaire (NBI) or the The Hypo Quizz.

The real question is why is the body overproducing adrenaline and at the wrong time and circumstances?

The answer lies in the function of adrenaline. Adrenaline apart from being a fight/flight hormone is also a hormone that converts sugar stores in the body (glycogen) into glucose. Glucose is the brain's major source of energy. It requires about 70% of glucose to fuel the biochemical machinery of brain cells. Without that energy brain cells will soon die. Thus whenever the brain senses energy starvation it will trigger the release of adrenaline so as to feed the brain again with energy. For the effects of insulin resistance on the body see here.

The next question is: why is the brain starved of energy with all that sugar being consumed in our society?

The reason is that a person may have a physical disorder that prevents the conversion of sugar sources in food (carbohydrates) into biological energy called <u>ATP</u>. That energy is essential in the production of feel good (relaxing) neuro-chemicals, such as <u>serotonin</u>. Without it we will feel anxious, insecure, in danger and panicky without knowing why.

This is usually the case when a person suffers from <u>Insulin Resistance</u>. Insulin Resistance is usually associated with the development of <u>Diabetes Type II</u>. Most doctors can test this, but they appear to have problems testing for pre-diabetic insulin resistance, because they have not been trained for this. We have a test for hypoglycemia at our web site. This condition is called "The Hypoglycemic Syndrome" which is characterized by unstable blood sugar levels, going up and down. Unstable blood sugar levels, due to insulin resistance, causes the body to release stress hormones, such as adrenaline and <u>cortisol</u>. Whenever there is a sudden drop in brain sugar levels, adrenaline kicks in to attempt the redress the imbalance.

Thus now we have an explanation how excess adrenaline can cause OCD, and for that matter many other so-called "mental" illnesses

The solution is to go on a <u>hypoglycemic diet</u>, which is similar to a diabetic diet. It normalizes blood sugar levels, and stops the brain from producing stress hormones. Apart from hypoglycemia there are many other metabolic disorders that are responsible for "abnormal psychological" experiences, but this is another matter.

See also Research Studies:

Adrenaline
Impulse Control & hypoglycemia
Brain/Sugar Interaction
Depression and Insulin resistance
Depression and Genes
Gambling research

Glucose/ATP requirement of the brain Serotonin and carbohydrates (sugars) Shoplifting

Please read:

What is Hypoglycemia.

Gambling and Hypoglycemia

The Serotonin Connection

Beating Anxiety and Phobias

Depression is a Nutritional Disorder

Depression- Disease of Energy Production

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