

Alexithymia and Health: Correlational Study

Nishi Rani

Govt. Rajindra College, Bathinda.

Shruti

Govt. Rajindra College, Bathinda

Seema Gupta

Govt. Rajindra College, Bathinda

Abstract

Emotional health is an important part of overall health (AAFP, 2018). Emotional disability can create lot of problems and impact badly on our health. Alexithymia is one of these problems. Alexithymia literally means a lack of words for feelings. Alexithymia is not a disorder, but is seen as a trait. People who experience alexithymia are unable to recognize emotions and their subtleties and to understand or describe thoughts and feelings. Sometimes alexithymia makes it hard for them to tell a story or understand the emotional experience of others (Serani, D; 2018). Alexithymia is prevalent in almost 10 percent of population and is known to be co morbid with a number of psychiatric conditions (Weiss.T.C; 2015). The purpose of this research is to study that the alexithymia can create health problems or not?

Introduction:

World health organization defined health as "a state of complete physical, mental and social well being". But the green paper OUR HEALTHIER NATION defined health as, "being confident and positive and able to cope with ups and downs of life". Every person has varied feelings which are called emotions. Emotions are a very important part of our life. Every day we get the chances to be happy, sad or angry. Emotion is a strong feeling deriving from one's circumstances, mood and relationships with others. Emotional health defines a person's ability to deal with his/her emotions in day to day life whenever the situation changes. Emotional well being is as equally important as physical well being. We often tend to ignore our emotions and think it as best suited way to deal with them. But ignoring them will cause long term effect on our overall well being. For example if we ignore our sadness and will not find a way to vent that particular emotion out it will affect our daily activity and will burst in any of the form like temper, detachment, crying etc and also can affect our relations. Along with physical health is it important to take care of our emotional health as emotional and physical health is inextricably linked. Whether we are happy or sad, our bodies respond physically to the way we think, feel or act. (Stephens, 2011). So, according to this study the emotions have impact on our health.

Emotional health can lead to success in work, relationships and health. In the past, researchers believed that success makes people happy. Newer research reveals that it's the other way around. Happy people are more likely to work toward goals, find the resources they need and attract others with their energy and optimism- key building blocks of success. (APA, 2017)

The suppression of emotions can lead to the bad physical problems. Like if we suppress our emotion of anger than the suppressed anger can be an underlying cause of anxiety and depression. Anger that is not appropriately expressed can disrupt our relationships, effects thinking, behavior patterns and create a variety of physical problems. Chronic (long-term) anger has been linked to health issues such as high blood pressure, heart problems, headaches, skin disorders and digestive problems (Blaud, 2016). From this study it can be said that the suppression of emotions can create various health problems.

There is another problem which is the result of the emotional disability that is Alexithymia. Alexithymia is a personality characteristic in which the individual is unable to identify and describe their emotions. The main feature of alexithymia is emotional unawareness, lack of social attachment, and poor interpersonal relating. Furthermore those suffering from alexithymia have difficulty recognizing and understanding the emotions of others. (Schwartz, A.N; 2012). Alexithymia literally means ("no words for feelings") refers to a person's inability to identify or verbally describe his or her feelings. (Zaidel, E. Kaplan, J. 2007). The definition regarding alexithymia is that the literal meaning of alexithymia is "no words for mood." This term is applied to those individuals who have difficulty describing their emotions. This phenomenon is commonly observed among those suffering from chronic somatic problems, including chronic pain. (Thornton & Argoff, 2009).

Alexithymia is a clinical term for the inability to understand the intricacies of feelings and emotions the existence and study of alexithymic experiences started in the 1970's. Alexithymia is also understood to have two components; a cognitive component where people might face challenges with thinking and emotions while trying to name, understand and talk about feelings, as well as an effective component where people might struggle with the experience of sharing, responding to and sensing emotions. People who experience the effects of alexithymia might notice some different things such as, a lack of impulse control, violent or disruptive outbursts, indifference towards other people, difficulties with articulating emotions, difficulties with naming different kinds of emotions, struggling to identify emotions expressed by others, heightened sensitivity to sights, sounds or physical touch, a narrow capacity to understand the reasons behind certain emotions. So alexithymia is not just a lack of interest in emotional connection, it is rooted in psychological and neurological mishaps that can be sources of frustration for people who experience the symptoms as well as people around them. (Weiss.T.C; 2015). So alexithymia is a trait