

Good anorexia research paper example

[Family](#), [Children](#)



Introduction

Anorexia nervosa is psychological disorder in which a person has an abnormal eating behaviour, so that the person can lose weight. The word anorexia nervosa was first used in 1873, by one of Queen Victoria's physician known as Sir William Gull. There are two types of anorexia which are the restricting type and binge-purge type. According to the medical term, this disorder is said to be lack of appetite (Kaye, 2009, p. 450). The people who are suffering from it have fear of gaining weight. This prompts them to do whatever it takes to lose weight. Anorexia is mostly experienced among girls and some men. In general, adolescent girls usually look at their figure more and that is why they are the ones who are mostly affected. By refusing to eat food the body starts having hormonal and metabolic disorders that could affect the health of the person.

This disorder affects people of all ages, race, culture and social standings. This means it does not discriminate anyone. Anorexia is usually accompanied by depression or obsessive compulsive disorder. There are many reasons that cause anorexia such as emotional problems and traumatic events such as sexual abuse. It is considered to be life threatening, because of starvation thus leading to death. There is also electrolyte imbalance, they could get heart failure and others could become suicidal. Due to the fact that people with this disorder starve themselves then they get high levels of the hunger hormones known as ghrelin in their blood stream. This hormone gives signs to the body that it needs to be fed. For some many people anorexia is very chronic thus it can be a lifelong problem. The good thing about anorexia once it has been detected it can be cured before it becomes fatal. This

disorder is almost similar to bulimia nervosa disorder in which the person eats but vomits the food they have ingested intentionally. Anorexia can also be prevented by doctors when they educate the public about this disorder and how to escape it. Anorexia has many signs and symptoms which could be identified and treated.

History of anorexia

Anorexia might have begun during the Hellenistic era when religious fasting was introduced to the people. Some of the well known historical figures women who are believed to have also had this disorder are Mary queen of Scots and Catherine of Siena. Fasting was first practiced for religious purposes by women to maintain their purity. In the 13th century, the Catholic Church was the one that experienced many women starving themselves so that they can be claimed saints. In the case of Catherine Siena in the 14th century, the church began to worry over her extreme starvation. This made the church to ask her to pray to God so that she would be able to eat again. In 1689, anorexia was first used medically by the physician Richard Morton. One of the patients of Richard who had this disorder was an 18 year old girl who died 3 months later from starvation (Friedman, 1984, p. 702). One of the first male patients was Noah Webster who was a student in Yale College. His reason for not eating was because he thought that by eating his mind will be dulled.

In the 19th century, that is when anorexia was proclaimed as a medical condition. William Gull published a paper which detailed about the disorder and how it should be treated. In the 20th century, Hilde Bruch wrote a book about anorexia that caused many people to be interested in it. In 1983,

Karen carpenter a well known drummer and singer died from this disorder thus sparked the attention of the media and public. There have been many celebrities who have been diagnosed with this disorder such as Fiona Apple, Calista Flockhart, Tracy Gold, Portia de Rossi, Mary Kate Olsen and Alanis Morissette. There are others who have died due to this disorder such as the Isabelle Caro who was a French model (Friedman, 1984, p. 702).

Signs and symptoms

There are many signs and symptoms that will enable people to be aware that a certain person has this ailment. Some of the most noticeable signs are the dramatic weight loss of a person. When the person is eating they have an obsession of avoiding anything that could increase their calories or avoid any food that has fats. There are some patients who have an obsession of cooking food but when others are eating it they tend to abstain. A person will start to exercise a lot after they have taken food. A person will start complaining a lot that they have gained too much weight. There are some people who will start having bulimic symptoms such as vomiting immediately after ingesting food. The person could have depression and will be easily irritated by people or anything (Kaye, 2009, p. 452).

The person will concentrate more about being skinny than anything else consequently the individual will lose concentration and will underperform especially if the individual is in school. The individual refuses to eat with other people so that they can eat their food in small quantities or throws it away. The skin of the individual would become very dry. The individual will also have bad breath due to constant vomiting. The patient will take a lot of diet pills instead of eating food. The individual's hair will start to be very thin

or others lose their hair. The individual will start isolating themselves especially the teenager's and hide in their rooms more. The women will start experiencing amenorrhea where they don't get their menstrual cycles for more than three months consecutively.

The person will start being exhausted easily while doing simple tasks. There are some people who start having memory loss of things that happened in their lives. The person will be in denial when confronted about having anorexia. The person will start looking older than they are especially if they are teenagers. Some of the signs that the doctor will be able to find that the individual is suffering from this disorder are by detecting low blood pressure. The heart beat rhythm will be very abnormal for a normal person to have. The individual will also complain about an upset stomach or a bloated stomach.

Causes of the disorder

There are many causes of the disorder ranging from biological, sociological and psychological.

Sociological and psychological effects

It has been observed that anorexia mostly occurs to children who have reached puberty. The female adolescents are the ones at a higher risk of getting it compared to the male adolescent. In most American schools the children who are seen to be overweight are usually bullied by others. This causes many children to be anorexic in order to not be bullied by others. In many schools most of the "cool" kids are very masculine for boys while the girls are very skinny and are cheerleaders. This will cause the other children to find ways in which they will increase their social status in the school and

be more like the ‘cool kids’. The media is one of the most influential tools especially for children (Walsh & Timothy, 2007, p. 1806). Most of the children’s role models are usually shown on the media thus the children want to grow up being just like them that includes their appearance.

Most role models for children are actors or singers whose bodies are considered perfect by critics when the women are skinny and men are masculine. The actors who are overweight are considered to be unhealthy and thus are slammed by the critics. This has negative effects on the children who start starving themselves so that they can be skinny while the boys start using steroids to have six pack bodies. Most models are anorexic as a result they are really skinny and said to be very beautiful. Young girls who buy fashion magazines will do whatever it takes to feel as beautiful as these models hence they end up being anorexic or bulimic (Kovacs & Parmer, 2004, p. 225). There are websites which are formulated that encourages people to be skinny or masculine for them to be beautiful or handsome in the society. This lowers the self-esteem of many people in the society. There are many celebrities whose self esteem were shattered thus became anorexic such as lady gaga, Kate Moss and Nicole Ritchie. These are the people who should educate children on the dangers of being anorexic. There are other issues such as sexual abuse that causes the individual to be anorexic. Fiona apple who is a renowned singer spoke out about her anorexia which was caused by sexual abuse. She starved herself in order to not be physically attractive to others, so that she would not be assaulted again by anyone else. So it is very important for anyone who has been sexually assaulted to be taken to the psychologist to seek treatment. There

are some parents who will put a lot of pressure on their children so that they become perfect in everything. This causes the children to be anorexic in order to not disappoint their parents. When parents divorce the children will experience depression which could lead to anorexia. There are some traumas such as death of a loved one while the person is in puberty will also cause the disorder (Walsh & Timothy, 2007, p. 1808). There are some activities practiced in schools such as swimming, gymnastics, acting, figure skating, cheerleading and running that requires one to have a lean body. These activities could cause the person to be anorexic in order to take part in them. Obsessive compulsive disorder is also associated in causing a person to become anorexic.

Biological effects

There are brain chemicals such as serotonin which causes a person to be depressed that could also be involved in causing a person to be anorexic. There are some cases where the disorder is said to have been brought up by genetic predisposition that makes it run in the family. It is believed that when a person in the family especially a big sisters start being anorexic the younger sister will have a high chance of also being with the same disorder. It is believed that malnutrition will cause hormonal imbalance that will surely affect how the brain functions and will cause the person's disorder to worsen. The brain's hypothalamus is the one that controls when a person is meant to be eating. The hypothalamus produces the ghrelin chemicals which will cause the body to feel hungry and once the individual has taken food the brain sends a message to the body indicating it is satisfied (Walsh & Timothy, 2007, p. 1805).

Lack of zinc in the body of person could also lead a person to acquire this disorder. Once a person does not take food then the brain will release a distress signal which will cause the body to feel guilty or cause anxiety. There are some infections that people get such as streptococcus that could lead a person to be anorexic. There are some cases of anorexic patients where the cerebral blood flow in the temporal lobes is shown to have reduced. This could mean that when the cerebral blood flow is reduced in a person's body it brings about anorexia. There are some cases where when there is a prenatal complication such as anaemia; preeclampsia or diabetes mellitus the child might end up becoming anorexic when they grow up.

Diagnosis

Once a person is suspected of having anorexia then they should be taken to the hospital for further tests. The doctor will do psychological evaluation tests on the patient and some laboratory tests will be conducted. The doctor will use the SCOFF questioner in order to have clear indication of whether the patient is anorexic. While doing the lab tests the things that are checked are the blood, heart rate and bone density. Once the individual is diagnosed then they are treated by different people ranging from the psychologist, a doctor and nutritionists (Kaye, 2009, p. 450).

Anorexia treatment

The treatment of anorexia ensures that the weight of the person is returned to normal. The treatment is a combination of medication, psychiatric help and dietary. The psychological problem the person had that caused the disorder is also examined and treated or controlled by the psychologist. It is

also very essential for the person who is being treated to be involved in the act and should also accept that they have a problem (Walsh & Timothy, 2007, p. 1809).

Medication

There is no FDA approved medications for people suffering from anorexia. The doctors give the patient anti-depressant such as serotonin reuptake inhibitors or fluoxetine. This could help patients whose depression is what brought about the disease. Fluoxetine is believed to make the patients moods to improve and also caused them to gain some weight. There are some patients who are prescribed drugs that treat OCD. These drugs may be helpful but they work well with other treatments such as therapy. Since the body was not getting enough nutrients the doctor will give the patient iron supplements. The doctor will also give the patient some drugs such as antihistamine or cyproheptadine that will increase the appetite of the patient. There are medical herbs which are used to cause the patient to eat such as teas, glycerites, ashwagandha and fenugreek which increases the appetite of a person (Walsh & Timothy, 2007, p. 1809).

Therapy

Counsellor should be able to determine the strong emotions that caused the patient to be anorexic. By finding this problems they should teach the patients on how to deal with their emotions, stress and relationship problems they might have in their lives. The cognitive behavioural therapy is used to ensure that a person begins to eat by restoring their distorted attitudes towards food. The acceptance and commitment therapy is used by the

counsellor to make sure the patient gets better mentally. This is considered to be among the most effective method of treating a patient with anorexia. The family based treatment is one of the best treatments because the patients are assured that they are not alone and that their family is always with them. In the family therapy the family and the patient are able to discuss their problems in the open and thus are able to take out a lot of baggage the patient was carrying that caused the disorder (Salvador et al, 1978). Hypnosis is used in order to boost the self-esteem of the individual. Biofeedback is also very essential because it enables a person suffering from anorexia to be stress free.

Dietary

Most anorexic patients are malnourished thus they need nutrition counselling in order to know what kind of food they should eat in order to get back to normal. The nutritionist will develop a meal plan which should be followed by the patient. The meal plan should have enough calories, fatty acids, iron, zinc and vitamins. It has been observed that most patients who take foods which have sufficient zinc are able to gain weight faster than those without (Kaye, 2009, p. 453).

Preventive measurements

There are many ways in which this disorder could be maintained once it has been diagnosed so as to avoid relapse. A relapse is usually experienced in the beginning when the patient is able to gain some weight and then all the insecurities they once had comes back. The nutritionist has an obligation of ensuring that the diet plan is being followed by the patient (Steinhausen,

2002, p. 1289). Through following the diet plan the patient is able to know which foods are good and healthy. This makes it easy for the patients to not relapse. The patient is also encouraged to continue with psychotherapy and medication for anxiety or depression. With family therapy the family is able to know what caused the disease so they are able to ensure they don't bring back issues that will affect them. The patient is encouraged to stay away from people who are said to have influenced the disorder.

Epidemiology

According to the research that was done by National Comorbidity Survey Replication, 0.9% of women in the United States are getting this disorder while the men are 0.3%. The survey also showed that the adolescent children are the ones at a higher risk of getting this disorder compared to the adults. It has been observed that about fifty to seventy percent of the people suffering from anorexia usually have a full recovery. The process of recovery is the one that takes longer. About five to ten percent of individuals with anorexia end up dying by either suicide or complications from starving (Steinhausen, 2002, p. 1288).

In conclusion, anorexia is an eating disorder in which the individual does not eat sufficient food. It is made up of two types which are binge purge and restricting. Anorexia began during the Hellenistic era where the women fasted in order to become saints. One of the physicians of Queen Victoria called Sir William Gull was the first person to document about this disorder in a seminar. In the 20th century, that is when the issue about it was documented in the media when a singer Karen Carpenter died from it. There are many signs and symptoms that could tell people who are anorexic. Some

of the physical signs are tremendous weights lose, hair lose, the hands and feet could be swollen or cold, absent menstrual cycle and a very dry skin.

The behavioural signs of anorexia are cooking and not eating the food, hiding from others when eating, eating food in small quantities, eating and then throwing up immediately and secluding yourself from others.

Psychological signs are depression, when a person keeps insisting they have gained weight and obsessive compulsive disorder in terms food. There are many causes of the disorder such as biological where the prenatal complications such as preeclampsia and anaemia could cause the child to get it when they grow up. Sociological cause such as when the media and society depicts a skinny person to be more beautiful thus causes the children to try to be like them. Its treatment is a combination of psychotherapy, medication and nutrition. The ways to keep a person suffering from this disorder from relapsing is by continuation of taking therapy, following the dietary plans and consulting the doctors for medication (Kaye, 2009).

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