

Anhedonia Background and Assessment

Anhedonia is increasingly recognized as a common symptom domain across multiple psychiatric conditions that can be associated with poorer outcomes, reduced quality of life, and higher rates of relapse.¹

Definition

The *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition (DSM-5)* definition of anhedonia differs slightly according to the patient's primary diagnosis^{a,b} but has been historically characterized as the diminished ability to desire and experience pleasure from activities that are typically enjoyable.¹⁻³

Prevalence in Psychiatric Disease

Anhedonia is a common symptom of several psychiatric disorders and is often seen in major depressive disorder (MDD), bipolar I disorder (BP-1), and schizophrenia.²⁻⁴



in MDD⁴



in BP-1⁴



in schizophrenia⁵

Impact on Patients

Anhedonia has been linked to greater severity of clinical symptoms, poorer treatment response, and worse clinical outcomes in patients with MDD, BP-1 and schizophrenia.^{4,5}



MDD

Greater depression severity^{3,6}

More depressive episodes^{3,7}

Longer episode duration^{3,8}

Persistence of depression after 12 months³

Increased risk of suicidality³



BP-1

More comorbidities⁹

More severe mania⁹

Increased risk of suicidality⁹



SCHIZOPHRENIA

Greater illness severity¹⁰

Increased risk of suicidality¹⁰

One of the most common scales is the Snaith-Hamilton Pleasure Scale (SHAPS), which consists of 14 items used to assess anhedonia in four domains¹¹:



INTERESTS AND PASTIMES



SOCIAL INTERACTIONS



SENSORY EXPERIENCES



DIET

Key Takeaways

Despite the absence of specific treatment recommendations, clinicians should routinely assess patients for anhedonia because it is highly prevalent across psychiatric disorders, has been linked to poorer clinical or functional outcomes, and can help guide clinical decision-making and tailor treatment approach to the needs of individual patients.^{1,3}

¹MDD and BP-1 definition: "Markedly diminished interest or pleasure in all, or almost all, activities most of the day, nearly every day."²

²Schizophrenia definition: "Decreased ability to experience pleasure from positive stimuli or a degradation in the recollection of pleasure previously experienced."²

References

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