

Q & A Mindline



Dr Roshan Jain

Senior Consultant Psychiatrist &
De-addiction Specialist
Apollo Hospitals, Bangalore

Q I can't stop thinking day and night and my mind drifts all over. I don't have any specific worries but find myself worrying about everything. At times I leave work and don't even realise how I reached home. I am a 29-year-old married man with three kids, somewhat managing work and other commitments. Advice appreciated.

I assure you that you are not alone in the troubling experience described. Many complain about restless mind, difficulties in concentration and associated forgetfulness.

Increasingly, people are finding it hard to hold their concentration on things at hand, as mind wanders into the past, often interpreting or regretting what should have happened, or into the future worrying about what must happen. In this process we are losing the precious 'present'.

In our modern fast paced urban electronic lifestyle and never-ending material aspirations, we are surrounded by unprecedented distractions. The mind goes into an auto mode, processing information superficially to avoid getting overwhelmed with

undesired opinions and judgments. Perhaps we are being robbed or are robbing ourselves of those precious moments that would have enabled us to experience events, things and even emotions, as they are meant to be experienced. In simple words we are living 'mindlessly'.

Simple things work best. Getting a work-life balance would be a good start. Reduce commute/travel and work load. Dedicate time to finer aspects of life and relationships, you will feel reconnected. Ensure a good night's sleep (at least seven hours) throughout the week. Relax and practise simple meditative practice called 'mindful breathing'. It's a way of cultivating the mind's ability to hold attention on what is desired, thereby enriching the experience. A simple 5-10 minutes of mindfulness meditation, twice a day, will reduce restlessness of mind and shift you from a state of mindlessness to mindfulness (meaning paying purposeful attention to bring your mind to the present).

Q I have problems like fast heartbeats, sweating and shaking of limbs. These happen for no particular reason and cause me worry. Health checks including ECG, treadmill test, etc. suggest no heart problems. I am still worried about getting a heart attack, therefore, am slowly cutting down on physical activities. Please suggest the way ahead.

From the information, it seems you may be suffering from an anxiety disorder namely hypochondriacal disorder with panic attacks. This is sometimes referred to as hypochondriasis or health anxiety. It is likely that your anxiety is manifesting in the form of excessive preoccupation or worry about having a serious illness.

Hypochondriasis can be triggered by a life event such as death of friend/

family member who may have suffered similar symptoms before their sudden unexpected death. It is known that an anxious personality with excessive focus on minor health concerns can contribute. Even random, obscure and inaccurate portrayal of illnesses in print and media can exacerbate health anxiety. For some, there may be underlying stress, depression and/or other psychological problems, which can present as bodily symptoms.

It is important that you seek professional consultation with a psychiatrist to explore your problems and commence treatment. You will benefit from structured psycho-education, advice and counselling about absence of medical condition, and linking presentation to possible triggers factors. Antidepressants can be considered. Talking therapy such as CBT is very effective in restoring an anxiety-free state.

Although uncommon, this condition is treatable. Early evaluation and treatment will prevent further suffering, speed up recovery, and reduce unnecessary expensive investigations.



Ask your queries at
bpositiveQA@apollolife.com