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Avoidant Personality Disorder

M2 Psychiatry Sequence

Michael Jibson
Fall 2008



Cluster C Personality Disorders

Avoidant Personality Disorder

- “A pattern of social inhibition, feelings of inadequacy, and hypersensitivity to negative evaluation.” (DSM-IV)
-



Avoidant Personality Disorder

Diagnostic Criteria for Avoidant Personality Disorder (DSM-IV)

A pervasive pattern of social inhibition, feelings of inadequacy, and hypersensitivity to negative evaluation, beginning by early adulthood and present in a variety of contexts, as indicated by four (or more) of the following:

- (1) avoids occupational activities that involve significant interpersonal contact, because of fears of criticism, disapproval, or rejection*
- (2) is unwilling to get involved with people unless certain of being liked*
- (3) shows restraint within intimate relationships because of the fear of being shamed or ridiculed*
- (4) is preoccupied with being criticized or rejected in social situation*
- (5) is inhibited in new interpersonal situations because of feelings of inadequacy*
- (6) views self as socially inept, personally unappealing, or inferior to others*
- (7) is unusually reluctant to take personal risks or to engage in any new activities because they may prove embarrassing*



Avoidant Personality Disorder

Clinical Vignettes



Avoidant Personality Disorder

- Prevalence: 0.5-1% of population
 - Sex ratio: M=F
 - Comorbidity: Social phobia, depression, anxiety
 - Family: Cluster C disorders
-



Avoidant Personality Disorder

Treatment

- Psychotherapy - Individual and group therapy, typically interpersonal (IPT), is the treatment of choice
- Medication - Antidepressants and anxiolytics are often useful for accompanying depression and anxiety



Avoidant Personality Disorder

Physician-patient Interaction

- Unconditional respect and concern are very helpful
- Avoid implications of rejection
- Be aware that even a limited personal interaction may be very important, and its loss very distressing



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Slide 5: American Psychiatric Association: *Diagnostic and Manual of Mental Disorders*, 4th ed, Text Revision (*DSM-IV-TR*), Washington, DC, American Psychiatric Association, 2000, p. 721