

PATIENTS' EXPERIENCES OF MEDICATION FOR ANXIETY DISORDERS

A. Igoumenou^{1,2}

¹Peninsula College of Medicine and Dentistry, Exeter, UK, ²National Greek Scholarship Foundation, Athina, Greece

Background to the study: Anxiety disorders are abnormal states in which the most noticeable features are mental and physical symptoms of anxiety. They are of the most common psychiatric disorders in the general population with the lifetime prevalence approaching a 21%.

The evidence based medicine lacks research on patients' experience of medication for psychiatric disorders, especially of medication for anxiety disorders.

This research involves patients referred to secondary care because of their anxiety symptoms and diagnosed as suffering with anxiety disorders.

Aims: To illuminate the subjective experiences of patients diagnosed with anxiety disorders and their experience of taking medication. Therefore qualitative methodology was appropriate.

Participants: All the potential participants in two Mental Health Trusts in the UK were informed about the research from their consultant psychiatrist or care coordinator if different, and provided with an information sheet. In depth interviews were used to explore patients experiences and phenomenological approach to analyse the data.

Findings: The patients we interviewed presented with a range of anxiety disorders. There were participants that suffered from generalized anxiety disorder, others with panic disorder, obsessive compulsive disorder, agoraphobia or social phobia. Furthermore, the pharmacological treatment they were receiving varied. The overall treatment varied as treatment with medication was combined with any talking therapy or other support.

In this presentation we share some of our patients' feelings and thoughts about living with an anxiety disorder, their attitudes about the chosen treatment, their subjective perceptions about their medication and their perceptions around the effectiveness of such a treatment.