
Somatic Symptoms & Illness Anxiety Disorder

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The word somatic came from the word “soma,” which refers to the body or the physical. Unlike any other disorders, Somatic Symptom disorder basically emerges when people excessively concern about their physical symptoms, which causes people to become acutely stressed. Psychologists hail anxiety as being the elemental cause of the disorder.

Somatic symptoms is actually a new category in the DSM-5. For ones who have a somatic disorder, they are experiencing physical symptoms that lead them to think about or grow anxious over a symptom whether there might not be anything wrong with the body at all. Scientific surveys show that roughly 20 to 50 percent of somatic symptoms experience drive people to seek medication or go to see doctors for consultation and potentially diagnosis. As a result, people stop being anxious after they know that there is nothing wrong with them. Quite interestingly, this disorder is not as uncommon as one might believe it is. Lastly, for people who experience somatic disorders, cognitive-behavioral treatments are recommended because it helps patients to relax and reduce anxiety level about the symptoms.

Illness Anxiety disorder is relative to Somatic Symptom disorder because the existence of undue anxiety is basic to the development of both disorders, but there are slight differences still. Before clarifying what the differences are between these two disorders, let's first look at what Illness Anxiety disorder is. Individuals who are plagued by illness anxiety symptoms are highly anxious about having or contracting a serious illness; these feelings can bring great bodily distress or be disruptive to one's routine. DSM-5 specifies the basic criteria for people who have this anxiety disorder as preoccupied with having or acquiring a serious illness, having a high level of anxiety about their health, repeatedly, and usually without cause, checking their body for signs of illness (health-related behavior), or avoiding going to the hospital.

In conclusion, while the differences between somatic symptom disorder and illness anxiety are rather quaint, the two are clearly characterized by their own symptoms and issues. Somatic symptom disorder is considered the culprit if somatic symptoms appear, but illness anxiety disorder is to blame for people who are very anxious about their health problems even without the presence of somatic symptoms.

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