



Delusions and Delusional Disorder

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DESCRIPTION

Previously delusional disorder called paranoid disorder is a kind of serious mental disease called a psychotic disorder. People who have it can't tell what's real from what is imagined. Delusions are the key symptom of delusional disorder. They're constant beliefs in something that isn't true or based on reality. But that doesn't mean they're totally unrealistic. Delusional disorder includes delusions that aren't strange, having to do with situations that could happen in real life, like being followed, poisoned, conspired against, deceived, or loved from a distance. These delusions commonly involve mistaken insights or experiences. But in reality, the conditions are either not true at all or highly exaggerated [1].

A bizarre delusion, by contrast, is somewhat that could never happen in reality, such as being cloned by aliens or having your thoughts broadcast on TV. Person who has such thoughts might be considered delusional with bizarre-type delusions [2].

People having delusional disorder often can continue to function and socialize normally, apart from the subject of their delusion, and usually do not behave in an obviously strange or bizarre manner. This is unlike people with other psychotic disorders, who also might have delusions as a symptom of their illness. But in some cases, people with delusional disorder might become so worried with their delusions that their lives are disturbed [3].

Although delusions might be a sign of more common disorders, such as schizophrenia, delusional disorder itself is rather rare. Delusional disorder most often happens in middle to lifelong and is slightly more common in women than in men [4].

Types of delusions in delusional disorders

The types are based on the main theme of the delusion:

- **Erotomaniac:** The person believes someone is in love with them and might try to contact that person. Often it's someone famous or important. This can lead to stalking behavior.

- **Grandiose:** This person has an over-inflated sense of worth, knowledge, power, or uniqueness. They could believe they have a great talent or made a vital discovery.
- **Jealous:** A person with this type believes their partner is unfaithful.
- **Persecutory:** Somebody who has this believes they (or someone close to them) are being mistreated, or that someone is spying on them or planning to harm them. They might make repeated complaints to legal authorities.
- **Somatic:** They believe they have a physical fault or medical problem.
- **Mixed:** These people have two or more of the kinds of delusions listed above.

Symptoms of delusional disorder

They usually include:

- Non-bizarre delusions are the most obvious symptom
- Irritable, angry, or low mood
- Hallucinations (seeing, hearing, or feeling things that aren't really there) related to the delusion. For example, someone who believes they have an odor problem might smell a bad odor

Causes and risk factors

As with many other psychotic complaints, the exact reason of delusional disorder is not yet known. But researchers are looking at the role of genetic, environmental, biological, or psychological factors that make it more likely [5].

- **Genetic:** The fact that delusional disorder is more common in people who are having family members with delusional disorder or schizophrenia advises genes may be involved. It is believed that, as with other mental disorders, a propensity to have delusional disorder might be passed on from parents to their children.

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- Biological: Researchers are studying how delusional disorders might happen when parts of the brain aren't normal. Abnormal brain regions that control perception and thinking may be linked to the delusional symptoms.
- Environmental/psychological: Evidence suggests that stress can trigger delusional disorder. Alcohol and drug abuse also might contribute to it. People who tend to be isolated, such as immigrants or those with poor sight and hearing, appear to be more likely to have delusional disorder.

CONCLUSION

Treatment most often comprises psychotherapy (a type of counseling) and medication. Delusional disorder can be very problematic to treat, in part because those who have it often have deprived insight and do not know there's a psychiatric

problem. Studies show that close to half of patients treated with antipsychotic medications show at least partial development.

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