



OBSESSIVE COMPULSIVE DISORDER



Fortis Charitable Foundation
54, Janpath, New Delhi -110001
www.fortisfoundation.in

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1 WHAT IS OBSESSION?

Obsessions are constant, intrusive, unwanted thoughts, images or impulses that cause distress. Patients recognize that these thoughts or images are a product of their own mind and are excessive or unreasonable but they are unable to control them.

2 WHAT IS A COMPULSION?

Compulsions are urges to do something to lessen distress, usually the discomfort caused by an obsession. When severe, a constant repetition of rituals may fill the day, making a normal routine impossible.

3 WHAT COULD FORM INTO AN OBSESSION?

- Cleaning (e.g. hand washing for fear of contamination)
- Repeating (e.g. uttering a name fearing harm if they don't)
- Preoccupation with symmetry (e.g. overwhelming pre-occupation with the arrangement of a desk)
- Checking (e.g. checking the lock or stove for fear of harming oneself or others)

4 WHAT CAUSES OCD?

- **Biochemistry** – Imbalance in neurotransmitter levels, particularly serotonin
- **Genetics** – OCD tends to run in families
- **Brain Structure** – studies have found subtle changes in brain structure in patients with OCD.
- **Learning** – observational learning and conditioning also play an important role in starting and maintaining obsessions and compulsions.

5 HOW IS IT TREATED?

Cognitive behaviour therapy can facilitate patients to control compulsive behaviours and correct obsessive thoughts. Exposure-response prevention is the technique of choice in OCD.

6 ARE MEDICATIONS REQUIRED?

Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitor medication that increases the level of serotonin is very beneficial in treating this illness. Other medication which involve newer combinations are also useful in resistant cases. Medications and psychotherapy together yield the best treatment outcome.

For any queries, write in to us at mentalhealth@fortishealthcare.com

Content by: Dr. Samir Parikh - Director, Mental Health & Behavioural Sciences
Fortis Healthcare