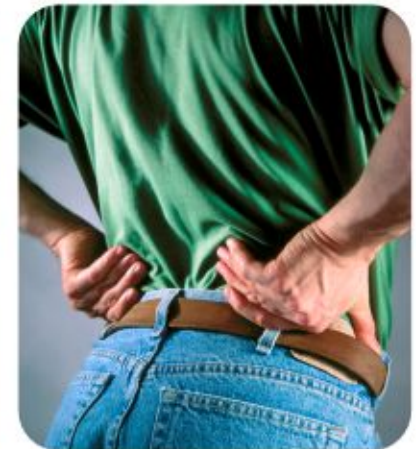
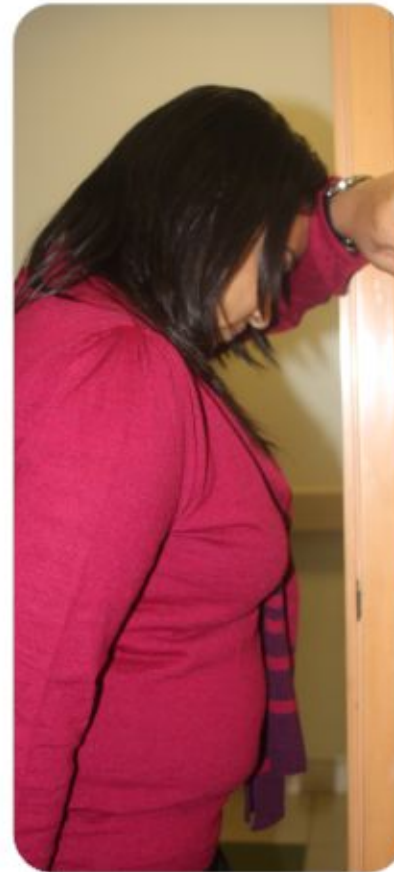
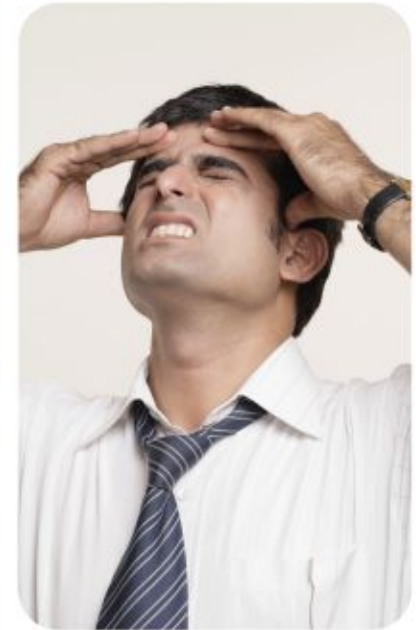


SOMATIC  
SYMPTOM  
DISORDER



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# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1

## WHAT IS SOMATIZATION DISORDER?

Somatization disorder is a chronic condition characterized by recurrent physical symptoms over several years for which no medical cause can be found. This disorder usually has a long duration and fluctuating course. It is important to note that these symptoms are real, and not faked on purpose.

## WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF SOMATIZATION?

2

The symptoms of this disorder include:

- Headache, abdominal pain, chest pain, backache or joint pain.
- Nervous system symptoms, such as fainting, paralysis, or vision problems.
- Bloating, vomiting, diarrhoea, or trouble in eating.
- Reproductive system problems such as problems with erections, irregular periods or pain with menstruation, sexual intercourse or urination.

3

## WHAT CAUSES SOMATIZATION DISORDER?

- **Genetic Component:** Somatization disorder tends to run in families.
- **Cognitive impairments:** Faulty perception and misinterpretation of physical cues.
- **Learning:** Social, cultural and ethnic factors can be involved.

## HOW IS IT TREATED?

4

- **Psychotherapy:** to enable patients to explore possible benefits accrued from being seen as sick. For example, one may be able to avoid work or other responsibility by being sick while at the same time receive extra attention and care from family and friends.
- **Support Groups:** groups that meet regularly and offer social support can facilitate coping with illness and learning to develop more effective ways of responding to situations. Patience and support from friends and family is also essential. Family members may themselves benefit from counselling.

5

## ARE MEDICATIONS REQUIRED?

Psychiatric medicines may help with some symptoms, especially if an individual has anxiety, depression, or obsessions (ideas one can't stop thinking about).

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