

Less Disorder-nary Life!



Kranti Khanderkar explores the much misunderstood and unknown repetitive intrusive thought behaviour - Obsessive - Compulsive Disorder (OCD) and sheds some light on the life of a person with OCD

Some kids like to wash their hands, but Sana (name changed) does it too much. She wants to stop, but she feels her hands just don't clean enough, so can't turn off the water. Sometimes she scrubs her hands until they are red and raw. Sana knows that the time she spends washing and checking could be spent having fun with friends or doing her school-work, but she can't stop herself. If you think she might be going crazy or she's weird. Then you are mistaken. Sana suffers from OCD or obsessive-compulsive disorder.

"OCD is an illness that causes people to have unwanted thoughts (obsessions) and to repeat certain behaviours (compulsions) over and over again," explains Dr. Dilipkumar Chandravat, a psychiatrist.

"After regular interval, Sana feels she has to wash her hands again. As she spends so much time washing, she has to rush to get to school on time," confides Sulikha Sheikh, Sana's mother.

Any other illness/symptoms associated with OCD:

- ✓ Depression
- ✓ Anger spells
- ✓ Hyperirritability
- ✓ Mania
- ✓ Hypo-Mania
- ✓ Lot of interpersonal conflicts
- ✓ They may associated by Somatisation

"We all have habits and routines in our daily lives; however for people with OCD, their behavior gets in the way of their daily lives," reveals Dr. Chandravat. He adds, "Most people with OCD know that their obsessions and compulsions make no sense, but they can't ignore or stop them regardless."

"In school, Sana tries not to touch doorknobs, worrying that if she does she may catch a serious disease. She lags in her class work because she feels that she needs to keep rechecking everything over and over," expresses Neha Verma, Sana's teacher.

"During a quiz or test Sana checks and rechecks every answer and erases anything that isn't perfectly straight or neat. Sometimes she erases so hard it tears the paper. All this takes so long that Sana hardly ever finishes the test before time, and even though she knows the work, she often underperforms or fails," she

adds.

According to Dr. Chandravat, Normal thoughts and normal behaviour is under your control, but OCD comes to you against your wish and disturbs the balance. **A person who has OCD might also have the following obsessions:**

- ▶ Disgust with bodily waste or fluids
- ▶ Concern with order, symmetry (balance) and exactness
- ▶ Fear of thinking evil or sinful thoughts
- ▶ Thinking about certain sounds, images, words or numbers all the time
- ▶ Need for constant reassurance
- ▶ Fear of harming a family member or friend.

And these obsessive worries just don't quit. The brain keeps repeating them instead of moving on to something else. These worrying thoughts can make it hard to concentrate on anything else.

Some common compulsions related to OCD are:

- ▶ Checking drawers, door locks and appliances to be sure they are shut, locked or turned off
- ▶ Repeating, such as going in and out of a door, sitting down and getting up from a chair, or touching certain objects several times
- ▶ Ordering and arranging items in certain ways
- ▶ Counting over and over to a certain number
- ▶ Aving newspapers, mail or containers when they are no longer needed
- ▶ Seeking constant reassurance and approval

Obsessive-compulsive disorder isn't contagious. The cause of OCD is the chemical imbalance in the brain and may be hereditary. Sometimes brain infections can cause OCD too.

"Some victims say it seems like OCD takes over everything. But treatment can really help a person with OCD get better. Some are totally cured and now live normal life. OCD can be treated in five ways: Medication, Cognitive Behaviour Therapy, Rational Emotive Therapy, Psychotherapy and Counseling. The treatment for OCD depends in part on the stage of the patient's condition," expresses Dr. Chandravat.

According to him, around 2-3% of the

CELEBRITIES WHO HAVE OCD:

Cameron Diaz

Obsession: Doorknobs

Compulsion: Not only does she open doors with her elbows to avoid touching germ-infested knobs - doorknobs, that is - she also admits to scrubbing her Hollywood home scrupulously and washing her hands 'many times' each day.

Jessica Alba

Obsession: Perfectionism

Compulsion: She can be a little obsessive compulsive about things, but that just means that when she does things, she does them proficiently and to the best of her ability.

David Beckham

Obsession: Symmetry

Compulsion: Not only does he insist on lining up his shirts according to their colour, he is obsessive about symmetry and order throughout their home. He has got three fridges - food in one, salad in another and drinks in the third. In the drinks one, everything is symmetrical. If there's three cans of Diet Coke, he'd throw one away rather than having three - because it has to be an even number.

Leonardo Dicaprio

Obsession: Cracks in the pavement

Compulsion: During the shooting of The Aviator, Dicaprio revisited his childhood obsession and would frequently come late because of the compulsion of avoiding the cracks in the pavement, all in an effort to get in to the character of Hughes, an OCD sufferer himself.

population has effected by OCD. This obsession can lead to paranoia. It also creates distress in mind which can cause sexual and marital conflict. So if you have this disorder, it is very important to talk to your doctor and get it treated.

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