

Communication

New complementary approaches to anxiety treatment - Preliminary Results of a Narrative Review.

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Abstract: Anxiety disorders are prevalent mental health conditions with increasing numbers due to various factors such as the COVID-19 pandemic, armed conflicts, and climate changes. Besides, individual, provider, and systemic barriers can limit access to effective mental health services. To address these challenges and expand treatment options, traditional and modern complementary therapies have gained attention. This review focuses on acupuncture, mindfulness-based practices, virtual reality, music therapy, and the use of cannabidiol (CBD) and classical psychedelics. The findings suggest that acupuncture and electroacupuncture may have benefits in reducing anxiety symptoms, but more research with improved methodology is required. Mindfulness-based practices, including mindfulness exercises, yoga, Taijiquan, and Qigong, show promising results in reducing anxiety levels, although further high-quality studies are needed. Virtual reality-based therapy offers customizable experiences to confront anxiety-inducing situations. Music therapy demonstrates potential in alleviating anxiety symptoms. Additionally, emerging evidence suggests that CBD, ayahuasca, psilocybin, and LSD may have anxiolytic properties, but further extensive studies are necessary to understand their efficacy, safety, and practicality for anxiety treatment. These complementary approaches provide additional options for managing anxiety, complementing conventional treatments and addressing the growing prevalence of anxiety disorders.

Keywords: Anxiety, Complementary therapies, Acupuncture, Mindfulness, Taijiquan, Qigong, Virtual reality, Music therapy, Cannabidiol, Classical psychedelics.

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