

Family Medicine Clerkship Plain Language Summary

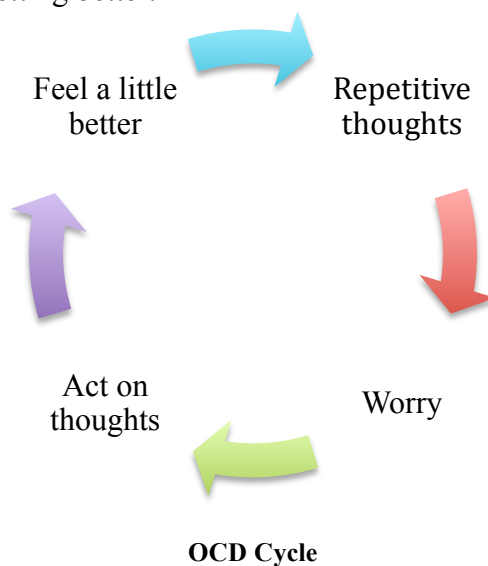
Title: Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder starting after age 60: Is there help?

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Plain Language Summary:

What is Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD)?

Let's break it down. Obsessive means that you have repetitive thoughts or feelings that you don't want to have. Compulsive means that to make those thoughts or feelings go away for awhile you have to do something which you may or may not be aware of doing. Disorder means not in order, or not the way your brain works at its best. So putting it all together, OCD means that you repetitively think about something that you don't want to, worry about it, and feel better only for a while after you do something. This happens over and over again without getting better.



Why did this happen now?

First of all, you didn't do anything wrong and you can't "catch" OCD from someone else like you can a cold. OCD usually happens when you are in your 20s or 30s, but sometimes it can happen when you get older. Scientists have tried to figure out why OCD happens and why it happens when it does. So far they haven't come up with a great explanation – it's still a mystery!

How many people have OCD when they get older?

Scientists think about 1.9-3.3% of people over 60 years old get OCD. That means that out of a hundred people you know that are older than 60, 2 or 3 of them have OCD. When you think about all of the people in the world that are over age 60, that's a lot of people who get OCD later in life. This means that you are not alone!

Is there anything that can help me?

Of course! Even though scientists have not found a cure for OCD, they have been looking at different things that can help. That means that scientists are talking to doctors who see people just like you to see what makes people feel better. So far doctors have found that talking to a psychologist, an expert in how we think, will help you to change how you think about those repetitive thoughts and feelings, and how to stop from doing something about it. Doctors have also found some medicine to be helpful. The type of medicine that seems to work most often for people with OCD is called a selective-serotonin reuptake inhibitor (SSRI). An SSRI is a medicine that works in your brain and stops serotonin, from going back into your brain too quickly. Serotonin is a brain chemical that can be low in people with OCD. This means that you have more serotonin to help make your OCD more manageable. Out of all of the many SSRI medicines, doctors have found that most people with OCD feel the best with a medicine called fluoxetine (/floʊˈæksəˌtɪn/). Your doctor will help you find the best medicine, dose and psychologist for you.

Additional Resources:

For more information:

Mayo Clinic

<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/obsessive-compulsive-disorder/DS00189>

Medline Plus:

<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/obsessivecompulsivedisorder.html>

Support, treatment and other resources:

Support Group:

<http://www.ocdtribe.com/>

National Alliance on Mental Illness Minnesota (NAMI) Support Groups:

<http://www.namihelps.org/support/support-groups.html>

Roseville - Meets on the 2nd & 4th Wednesdays, 6:30 p.m., at Centennial Methodist Church, 1524 Co. Rd. C-2 West, Will: 651-578-3364

International OCD Foundation:

<http://www.ocffoundation.org/>

Key Words:

Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder

OCD

SSRI

Selective-serotonin reuptake inhibitor

Behavioral therapy

Repetitive

Elderly

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