The study of GABA and other amino acids and how they affect the brain and behavior is making a significant contribution in the understanding of disease in man. Disease is now being found to arise from causes within the person such as nutrient imbalances and the body's reaction to stress as well as environmental changes that effect the brain's chemistry. These changes can and do cause a difference in perception.

The various functions of amino acids are the most important and diverse healers within the body. A new age of medicine has emerged and has substantial evidence that nutrient deficiencies can and do influence mind, mood, memory and behavior. Amino acid requirements in the body and brain are vastly increased by disease and inborn metabolic errors. Anytime a person is under prolonged periods of stress, anxiety, depression or grief, they require more amino acids, some more than others. The reason for the different requirements is biochemical individuality.

Every individual has a distinct chemical composition. The brain, glands and bones are distinct for each individual, not only in anatomy, but also in chemical composition. This does not mean that chemical compositions are fixed throughout life or that they are not influenced by nutrition. Nutrition and amino acid deficiencies affect every tissue in the body. Deficiencies can cause the kidneys stop functioning, the stomachs stop digesting, the adrenals stop secreting, and other organs follow suit.

GABA (Gamma-aminobutyric acid), an inhibitory neurotransmitter, is found throughout the central nervous system (C.N.S.). In view of our growing knowledge, regarding the regulation of physiology of the C.N.S., GABA is assuming an ever-enlarging role as a major contributor in the understanding of disease in man. This slows down or blocks the excitatory levels of related messages from reaching the cortex. The unceasing alert signals from the limbic system eventually overwhelm the cortex (the decision-making part of the brain) and the ability of the cortex and the rest of the stress network become exhausted. The balance between the limbic, and in fact, the rest of the brain to function in an orderly manner depends critically on inhibition. GABA inhibits the cells from firing, diminishing the anxiety related messages from reaching the cortex.

What GABA does is fill certain receptor sites in the brain. This slows down or blocks the excitatory levels of the brain cells that are about to receive the incoming information. When the cortex receives the message, it does not overwhelm you with anxiety, panic or pain. You are able to maintain control and remain calm. But if you are under prolonged stress or anxiety, your brain uses up all the available GABA, and this allows anxiety, fear, panic, and pain to hit you from every direction. Your ability to reason is diminished, the effects can now include a full blown anxiety or panic attack, excessive sweating, trembling, muscle tension, weakness, loss of control, disorientation, difficulty in breathing, constant fear, headaches, diarrhea, depression, unsteady legs, and the list is endless.

Research conducted at The Pain & Stress Center with patients suffering from all types of stress, pain, muscle spasms or anxiety/panic attacks has shown GABA can mimic the tranquilizing effects of Valium, Librium, or a multitude of other tranquilizers, but without the possibility of addiction or fear of being sedated. GABA fills the receptors in the brain and feeds the brain what should be there. There are GABA receptors in the brain and throughout the entire body. Pure GABA 750 or 375 dissolves in water; it is tasteless, odorless, and the calming results usually occur within seven minutes. GABA 750 or 375 and Anxiety Control 24 (AC 24) are exclusive products of The Pain & Stress Center. AC 24 contains GABA, glutamine, and glycine. All three are inhibitory neurotransmitters which slow excitatory messages down in the brain yet, does not sedate.

Tranquilizers are only a temporary coating, but a very dangerous one. We have seen many patients who are on Xanax when they come in with anxiety. They have been told it is not addicting...it is! Xanax will not stop anxiety or panic nor can it feed the brain the nutrients it needs. Consumer Reports of January 1993 carried an in-depth story detailing tests using Xanax. Their findings demonstrated Xanax is very addictive and ineffective. There is no such thing as a tranquilizer deficiency!—nutrient deficiencies do change behavior. Human behavior involves the functioning of the whole nervous system, and the nervous system requires amino acids. GABA is vital for energy and the smooth running of the brain functions.

GABA, itself, is an inhibiting neurotransmitter and is known to be a calming agent in the brain. Vitamin B6...
(pyridoxine) and Mag Link (magnesium chloride) are GABA's most important partners. We have successfully used GABA with patients to ease anxiety, muscle pain/spasms, and nervous stomachs. The GABA 750 we use is free form, not combined with anything else. There is a GABA with niacinamide and inositol on the market, but let me caution you—do not mega dose, as you will have side effects. It is best when you combine GABA with other amino acids such as the AC 24 that controls your stress and anxiety. Over the past years, we have done extensive research using amino acids in many areas of health, but especially anxiety, stress, depression and pain. My books, The Anxiety Epidemic, Heal With Amino Acids, or GABA, the Anxiety Amino Acid will give you information to help you understand what is happening in your body. Julian Whitaker, M.D., in his March 1994 newsletter Health and Healing, recommends GABA as an excellent source for anxiety-prone children and adults. Dr. Whitaker uses both GABA 750, 375, and Anxiety Control for his patients.

Michael J. Gitlin, M.D., in his book The Psychotherapist's Guide to Psychopharmacology describes mitral valve prolapse as being associated with panic and anxiety. A large number of women and men suffer from this problem and have intense anxiety and panic from skipped heartbeats. Anxiety and stress can and does provoke mitral valve prolapse. Patients will respond to a combination of GABA and magnesium to reduce their anxiety and mitral valve prolapse. The best combination is Anxiety Control and Mag Link, two to three times daily.

Dr. Phyllis Bronson, a nutritional biochemist at The Aspen Clinic, discovered women entering menopause have estrogen levels that are too high and progesterone levels that are too low. This can predispose them to anxiety and panic attacks. Dr. Bronson uses a combination of Anxiety Control, Mag Link, and Brain Link. She finds this protocol very helpful and her patients' symptoms subside. Candace Pert, Ph.D., a brilliant neuroscientist, discovered the GABA receptor site and established that there is GABA receptor sites throughout the brain and body. When the GABA receptor is empty from prolonged stress and anxiety we are prone to anxiety and panic attacks. Our brain function depends on brain nutrition. The brain is NOT a static organ. The cells constantly change with the influx of anxiety and stress-related messages from the limbic network. Stress demands amino acids to create needed neurotransmitters, the chemical language of the brain. Six hundred and fifty-seven muscles in your body demand magnesium every second of every day to supply them with needed fuel. Magnesium is a cofactor for GABA and all other amino acids. A major symptom of magnesium deficiency is anxiety and panic attacks. The public is now taking a serious interest in their health. This interest will bring GABA and other amino acids to the forefront of health care.

In closing, I would like to quote Pfeiffer's Law from The Healing Nutrients Within, “We found that if a drug can be found to do the job of medical healing, a nutrient can be found to do the same job. When we understand how a drug works, we can imitate its action with one of the nutrients.”

RESOURCES


Rogers, Sherry A., Depression Cured at Last! Sarasota, FL: SK Publishing, 1996


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