

Publication

Associations of fearful spells and panic attacks with incident anxiety, depressive, and substance use disorders : a 10-year prospective-longitudinal community study of adolescents and young adults

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The concept of fearful spells (FS) denotes distressing spells of anxiety that might or might not qualify for criteria of panic attacks (PA). Few studies examined prospective-longitudinal associations of FS not meeting criteria for PA with the subsequent onset of mental disorders to clarify the role of FS as risk markers of psychopathology.; A representative community sample of adolescents and young adults (N=3021, age 14-24 at baseline) was prospectively followed up in up to 3 assessment waves over up to 10 years. FS, PA, anxiety, depressive, and substance use disorders were assessed using the DSM-IV/M-CIDI. Odds Ratios (OR) from logistic regressions were used to examine the predictive value of FS-only (no PA) and PA at baseline for incident disorders at follow-up.; In logistic regressions adjusted for sex and age, FS-only predicted the onset of any subsequent disorder, any anxiety disorder, panic disorder, agoraphobia, GAD, social phobia, any depressive disorder, major depression, and dysthymia (ORs 1.54-4.36); PA predicted the onset of any anxiety disorder, panic disorder, GAD, social phobia, any depressive disorder, major depression, dysthymia, any substance use disorder, alcohol abuse/dependence, and nicotine dependence (ORs 2.08-8.75; reference group: No FS-only and no PA). Associations with psychopathology were slightly smaller for FS-only than for PA, however, differences in associations (PA compared to FS-only) only reached significance for any anxiety disorder (OR=3.26) and alcohol abuse/dependence (OR=2.26).; Findings suggest that compared to PA, FS-only have similar predictive properties regarding subsequent psychopathology and might be useful for an early identification of high-risk individuals.

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