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Dependent Personality Disorder
M2 Psychiatry Sequence
Cluster C Personality Disorders

Dependent Personality Disorder

• “A pattern of submissive and clinging behavior related to an excessive need to be taken care of.” (DSM-IV)
## Dependent Personality Disorder

### Diagnostic Criteria for Dependent Personality Disorder (DSM-IV)

A pervasive and excessive need to be taken care of that leads to submissive and clinging behavior and fears of separation, beginning by early adulthood and present in a variety of contexts, as indicated by five (or more) of the following:

1. has difficulty making everyday decisions without an excessive amount of advice and reassurance from others
2. needs others to assume responsibility for most major areas of his or her life
3. has difficulty expressing disagreement with others because of fear of loss of support or approval
4. has difficulty initiating projects or doing things on his or her own (because of lack of self-confidence in judgment or abilities rather than a lack of motivation or energy)
5. goes to excessive lengths to obtain nurturance and support from others, to the point of volunteering to do things that are unpleasant
6. feels uncomfortable or helpless when alone because of exaggerated fears of being unable to care for himself or herself
7. urgently seeks another relationship as a source of care and support when a close relationship ends
8. is unrealistically preoccupied with fears of being left to take care of himself or herself
Dependent Personality Disorder

Clinical Vignettes
Dependent Personality Disorder

- Prevalence: 2.5-27% of population
- Sex ratio: F>M
- Comorbidity: Mood and anxiety disorders, adjustment disorders
- Family: Cluster C disorders
Dependent Personality Disorder

Treatment

• Psychotherapy - Dynamic, behavior, group, and family therapies are all used successfully

• Medication - Anxiolytics are often helpful. Antidepressants may be used with comorbid depression.
Dependent Personality Disorder

Physician-patient Interaction

• Physicians should take an active role in treatment planning, with clear explanations and recommendations

• Patients may need encouragement to make decisions about treatment plans

• Family involvement is often helpful