

# **Panic Attacks, Stress, and Anxiety**

## **Summary**

This 29 year old woman was a victim of repeated panic attacks. She decided to try alpha brain wave training after the discouraging and ineffective experiences she had while seeking treatment for her condition through the modes of traditional medicine, which included medical doctors, therapists, even hypnotists.

She presented herself to us as a young mother who had experienced a fairly normal, traditional lifestyle, and an uneventful childhood. She married and stayed married to the first wonderful man who entered her life, with whom she had two children. She felt happy and well adjusted, experiencing no emotional problems when suddenly her life became a nightmare because of the inexplicable panic attacks.

A personal history of potential emotional instability surfaced during brain wave training sessions. The patient's mother was an epileptic incapable of caring for herself, much less her family. The father apparently did attempt caring for the mother, but eventually left when the patient was in her early teens. Her older sister (about 23 at that time and in a stable marriage) decided to take the patient in to provide her with a more stable environment during her adolescence. The patient portrayed herself as having had a happy adolescence and a happy marriage ... until the panic attacks began.

About a year before the panic attacks began, the patient and her husband had bought a restaurant which they were operating themselves. During the summer, they decided to take a vacation in Mexico, and had a wonderful time until the patient experienced a major traumatic incident. The evening before they were to return home, the patient got food poisoning and heat stroke. She suffered palpitations, shortness of breath, and general weakness. Her husband rushed her to a hospital, where no one spoke English, and the patient descended into a state of helplessness and dread. She feared she was going to die, and no one could help her. Nevertheless, the palpitations eventually subsided, even without proper medical care, and by the next day she was again fine. She and her husband returned home and resumed their work at their restaurant. One evening after a long day, the patient had another attack, like the one in Mexico, again experiencing palpitations, weakness, shortness of breath, fear, and dread. In short, this was another full blown panic attack. As time went on, she began to suffer these attacks more frequently. She was not originally a high anxiety person, but became increasingly more anxious because of fear of these attacks, which became a conditioned stimulus for anxiety.

The patient did quite well in the brain energy training, and experienced a complete cessation of the panic attacks. one full year later she still had not had another attack. Through the use of alpha brain wave training the patient began to fathom the genesis of feelings of helplessness and ultimate panic, and learned how to eliminate the anxiety attacks and to control her own mind and sense of well being.

## **Data Analysis**

One of the best ways of determining the existence of a relationship between treatment outcome and learned changes in brain energy is to perform correlations on data which relates changes in EEG to mood and personality changes. Left and Right Occipital Alpha changes were separately computed and correlated with changes in patient's mood and emotional state. The Clyde Mood Scale showed increases of "Friendliness" when she increased either right or left occipital alpha. Increases in alpha from right and left occipital were both correlated with reductions in "Aggressiveness", although the correlation was stronger with left occipital alpha. The most dramatic and powerful effect for J.B. was with the "Clear Thinking" scale which showed huge increases correlated strongly with increases of left occipital alpha ( $r = .81$   $p < .02$ ) and even more strongly with right occipital alpha increases ( $r = .96$ ,  $p < .0005$ ). For a woman having panic attacks wherein her thinking became clouded by extreme fear, the alpha-dependent increases of "Clear Thinking" ability represented salvation and the restoration of her ability to be a loving wife and mother.

The Profile of Mood States (POMS) also showed strong correlations with changes in alpha brain energy. The "Tension/Anxiety" measure was reduced when alpha increased occipitally. Two other scales also showed reductions of negative moods when alpha increased: "Depression/Dejection" and "Confusion/Bewilderment".

The Multiple Affect Adjective Check List (MAACL) also showed a relationship between alpha increases and anxiety decreases. Both left and right occipital alpha increases were related to reductions in anxiety. The MAACL anxiety scale has been shown to correlate with levels of biochemical stress indicators present in the blood, so we know that the reductions of MAACL "Anxiety" linked to alpha increases are related to both biological and psychological indicators of stress.

One of the best indicators of the overall improvement of this patient is the comparison of the "Before" and "After" versions of the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI). Improvements (reductions) in the Clinical Scales were quite consistent. Hysteria (HS) dropped 10 percentile points to 59. Depression (D) dropped 14 percentile points to 53. Hypochondriasis (HY), her worst problem, dropped 9 points to 68. Psychopathic Deviancy (PD) dropped 5 points to 56; Paranoia (PA)

dropped 8 points to 59; Psychasthenia (PT) dropped 11 points to 55, while Schizophrenia (SC) dropped 14 points to 54.

Over 10 years after completing her treatment, J.B. has had no further occurrences of the panic attacks which had threatened to completely disrupt her life. The fact that she has been able to remain strong, calm, and centered is all the more remarkable in view of the fact that her older sister (who had been her strength and support), subsequently went through some very traumatic times. Her strong supporting sister actually became an energy drain requiring J.B. to reverse roles and provide strength to her older sister. This she was able to do while maintaining her own psychological integrity and continuing to conduct herself as wife and mother. She recently remarked that she finds at least one opportunity every day to recognize the powerful effect that brain energy training had on her life.