Are Mood and Anxiety Disorders Inflammatory Diseases?

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Abstract

In the last few decades there has been a growing interest in the role of psychoneuroimmunological dysfunction in neuropsychiatric disorders. This article presents recent advances in the literature, from preclinical and clinical studies, suggesting that mood and anxiety disorders are, at least in part, conditions in which the inflammatory system is activated. The evidence-base comprises alterations in the peripheral immune systems of patients with mood or anxiety disorders, together with the development of depression- and anxiety-like symptoms induced by inflammatory agents. The reported anti-inflammatory effects of current psychototropic medications as well as the efficacy of anti-inflammatory medications in treating symptoms of depression and anxiety are also reviewed. Finally, potential mechanisms mediating the link between inflammation and symptomatology presented in these neuropsychiatric illnesses are discussed as well.