

Managing Anxiety Spectrum Disorders **Giuseppe Ceraudo***

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Department of Clinical and Experimental
Medicine, University of Pisa, Pisa, Italy

Short Communication

Anxiety spectrum disorders are amongst the most prevalent mental disorders and are responsible for reduced quality of life and significant disability in affected patients [1]. Anxiety is the anticipation of impending danger and dread accompanied by restlessness, tension, rapid heartbeat, and rapid breathing that may or may not be associated with a certain event or situation. A spectrum disorder is a mental disorder that includes a range of linked conditions, sometimes also extending to include singular symptoms and traits. The different elements of a spectrum either have a similar appearance or are thought to be caused by the same underlying mechanism. In either case, a spectrum approach is taken because there appears to be "not a unitary disorder but rather a syndrome composed of subgroups". The spectrum may represent a range of severity, comprising relatively "severe" mental disorders through to relatively "mild and nonclinical deficits". The anxiety spectrum concept describes all anxiety clinical conditions from subthreshold to full blown that interfere on quality of life. The anxiety spectrum [2] may include patients genetically predisposed or people exposed to a trauma or who lives under precarious conditions. Also, people receiving a diagnosis with a poor prognosis like cancer or degenerative diseases can show anxiety symptoms. However, current therapeutic strategies are not often sufficient to determine a total remission from anxiety symptoms. The main limit of psychopharmacological drugs is represented by the presence of side effects [3] that are often the cause of poor compliance to treatment. From this view, nutraceuticals compound can enlarge treatment opportunities. The absence of side effects can improve compliance to treatment and increase quality of life. Serotonergic antidepressants and benzodiazepines are frequently prescribed as the first step in the pharmacological approach to treat anxiety disorders [4]. Typically, antidepressants can induce sexual dysfunction, nausea and weight gain [3], instead the continued use of anxiolytics like benzodiazepines can lead to addiction, somnolence and cognitive deficits [5]. Even if they represent the first choice, in the new era informed web patients often ask a softer therapeutic approach to relieve anxiety symptoms and to avoid side effects from antidepressants and/or anxiolytics. Yet recent literature is still poor of research on nutraceutical compounds indicated in mental disorders. The hypothesis is that nutraceutical compound

Corresponding author: Giuseppe Ceraudo

✉ bepeceraudo@yahoo.it

Department of Clinical and Experimental
Medicine, University of Pisa, Pisa, Italy.

Tel: +39 3396739062

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with potential anxiolytic effects can begin the first choice for mild anxiety symptoms or can associate with a psychopharmacological treatment in more severe clinical conditions with the aim to use lower dosages of antidepressants or anxiolytic decreasing side effects. Also, special population can benefit from nutraceutical compound like in pregnant women, childhood, elderly, patient with disabilities or with mental retardation.

In this study, we showed for the first time the efficacy, without any side effects, of a new oral food supplement containing α -casozepine peptide in patients with anxiety spectrum disorders.

In the present study, we reported the effects of oral food supplement on 100 patients with anxiety symptoms, showing that 64% of the sample reported an anxiolytic effect, and among the 64 patients with sleep disorders, the 51.5% reported a pro-hypnotic effect. Considering patients in monotherapy with the dietary supplement, an anxiolytic effect was observed in 69.7% while a pro-hypnotic effect was observed in the 62.5% of the sample.

On the basis of our results, we believe that this oral supplement containing α -casozepine peptide could be a valid alternative or support to psychopharmacological drugs in patients affected by anxiety spectrum disorders with subthreshold or full-blown diagnoses in relation to reported anxiety symptoms, thanks to the absence of side effects and high compliance to treatment.

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