

FEBRUARY 2015

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Good Housekeeping

HOME ♦ HEALTH ♦ HAPPINESS

LOVE YOURSELF!

Steer clear of negativity
(10 types of people you need to avoid)

**LOOK GOOD
PICK FROM
QUICK & EASY
MAKEUP TIPS**

**ARE YOU A
HOARDER?**
(& how to tackle)

HOME BUDGET

**Make Your
Money Grow!**

exam
BANISH ^ STRESS
Follow the GH guide

WOW guests with
exotic veg dishes!
8 scrumptious recipes

JIMMY SHERGILL & PRIYANKA

*The actor says: 'At
home I am "me"
- husband and
father only'*



goodhealth



The Hoarding Disorder

Are You a Victim?

If you suspect you are, read on to know how you can cut the stress and bring order to your life

By Rene Verma

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That man in the kirana shop

who seems to have an ever-growing mountain of items (expired stuff too), a colleague whose tabletop is one big mess that looks as though it has never been cleaned, or your grandparent who refuses to part with any piece of furniture without throwing a fit – they all could be suffering from the hoarding disorder. How can you tell a messy person from someone who might be battling a serious hoarding disorder? Dr Anesh Baweja, senior consultant, psychiatry, from Sri Balaji Action Medical Institute, Delhi, explains: 'Almost all of us have some clutter – at our worktables, drawers, cupboards and the like. The difference is in the degree of disorganisation. While most people clean up their mess after a while, hoarders have trouble throwing things away even if they are of no value to them. Another thing is that while being messy is a lifestyle choice (or just laziness), **hoarding is now recognised as a specific mental disorder due to its ability to disrupt one's normal, day-to-day functioning.**'

Look Out For Warning Signs

Experts warn that disposophobia or the fear of getting rid of things tends to get worse with age. So while the symptoms might show up during adolescence, it's likely to worsen as one reaches adulthood. It's important to take note of early signs – jittery body language and a non-existent social life. **Dr Sandeep Govil, consultant psychiatrist, Saroj Super Speciality Hospital, Delhi says: 'Symptoms include anxiety, apprehensions, obsession with perfection, preoccupation with details**

DID YOU KNOW?

PARIS HILTON with 17 dogs is believed to be a pet hoarder.



and/or overpunctuality. There's no evidence to confirm a late onset of the disorder though. Another observation is that these hoarders are usually socially impaired and living alone.'

Offer Support – Not Sarcasm

It gets increasingly difficult for friends or family to be around a pathological hoarder who has withdrawn into a shell and is maniacally attached to objects – rather than people. 'People need to stop calling them a miser,' says **Dr Sandeep. Acknowledging that the behaviour stems from a deep-rooted psychological problem is important – only then will near and dear ones be able to offer the emotional support the patient needs. Often the patient will be in denial. So family members will need to play a proactive role in the diagnosis and treatment process. It helps if they can offer to accompany**

Compulsive hoarding can run in families and often a patient can recognise a family member with the same symptoms

the patient for therapy sessions and help him/her follow the organising skills to sort their belongings on the basis of relevance. Structuring the patient's life and fixing a daily schedule can also go a long way.

However, if nothing seems to be helping, it's best to consult a psychiatrist or an occupational therapist who can work closely with the patient to guide them through,' suggests Dr Sandeep.

Medicines: The Last Resort

Experts unanimously agree that psychotherapy (talk therapy) works best. During a series of sessions, the therapist works on identifying the cause for hoarding and then on skill development – along with relaxation skills, the patient is encouraged to pick up

de-cluttering strategies he/she can use in everyday life. The aim is to improve the patient's decision making/coping abilities along with gradually building on his/her self-confidence. By helping the patient feel safe, the therapist works on disengaging emotions from collected objects. 'Research is still on for using medicines to treat a hoarding disorder. Anti-depressants are prescribed only if depression caused by hoarding is severe enough to disrupt everyday functions,' says Dr Aneesh.

Sadly, the disorder remains largely undiagnosed and untreated in older adults and many people believe that it is the part of one's personality or lifestyle and consequently do not see the need for any treatment.

Experts warn that the fear of getting rid of things gets worse with age. So taking note of early signs becomes important

Remember Ariel?

She probably had the hoarding disorder too!

The endearing Ariel, from *The Little Mermaid* fairy tale has been a part of most of our growing up years. She's sweet, affable, irreverent. And a hoarder. It's telling that the story begins with Ariel rummaging through the remains of a shipwreck, collecting junk that she has no use for. After an argument, Ariel's father destroys her "collection of human treasures" – that she holds very dear. In another episode, Ariel decides to give the concert she'd promised her father she'd attend, a miss – because she wants to go around looking for human trash. The fact that she keeps all of it locked up and is irrationally attached to it only confirms that she indeed, might have been suffering from disposophobia.



Are You A Hoarder?

Take this quiz to find out: Say yes or no.

Q Do you have clothes in your cupboard that you haven't worn in the past three years but refuse to throw away?

Q You still haven't discarded broken crockery or appliances that don't function?

Q Are your overhead lofts crammed with old boxes,

packaging material, stationery items or electronic gadgets you no longer have use for?

Q Are you embarrassed when people come to your place and find your knick-knacks strewn all around?

Q There's hardly any breathing space in your rooms. Family and

friends are tired of pointing this out to you.

Q Do you often feel overwhelmed with heaps of stuff around you and break down?

Q Do you have a panic attack when it's time to part with your stuff – even if it's no longer serving a purpose in your life?

Q Do you feel aloof? Haven't met your friends even once in the last six months?

Q Do most people who know you think you are "volatile" and "oversensitive" or "slightly off"?

Q Is it a challenge to organise your living space; rendering it inaccessible?

If you have answered "yes" to more than 7 of these questions, it's time to fix an appointment with a psychologist.