

Catatonia

Catatonia is a state of neurogenic motor immobility and behavioral abnormality manifested by stupor. It was first described in 1874 by Karl Ludwig Kahlbaum, in *Die Katatonie oder das Spannungsirresein* (Catatonia or Tension Insanity).

In the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders 5th edition catatonia is not recognized as a separate disorder, but is associated with psychiatric conditions such as schizophrenia (catatonic type), bipolar disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, depression and other mental disorders, narcolepsy, as well as drug abuse or overdose (or both). It may also be seen in many medical disorders including infections (such as encephalitis), autoimmune disorders, focal neurologic lesions (including strokes), metabolic disturbances, alcohol withdrawal and abrupt or overly rapid benzodiazepine withdrawal.

It can be an adverse reaction to prescribed medication. It bears similarity to conditions such as encephalitis lethargica and neuroleptic malignant syndrome. There are a variety of treatments available; benzodiazepines are a first-line treatment strategy. Electro-convulsive therapy is also sometimes used. There is growing evidence for the effectiveness of NMDA antagonists for benzodiazepine resistant catatonia.

Antipsychotics are sometimes employed but require caution as they can worsen symptoms and have serious adverse effects.

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