GABA FOR ANXIETY

The fight or flight response we are born with ensures our survival by allowing us to sprint away from the “bad guy”. However, when the response system just doesn’t turn off, the body can become overwhelmed with an ongoing level of anxiety or worry. GABA (gamma-aminobutyric acid) is the neurotransmitter chemical in our brain that put’s the brakes on. After the “mission” is accomplished, GABA takes over, dampening excitability and calming us to a steady state.

Penn State University biologist Bernhard Luscher reports in the Journal of Biological Psychiatry that GABA deficiency causes the rise in anxiety and depression. Mounting evidence shows that ongoing stress can cause GABA deficits or dysfunction at any time in life. The results can be ruminating thoughts, worry, anxiety, and feelings of numbness or disengagement with the world. GABA dysfunction early in life has been shown to set the stage for schizophrenia and autism.

GABA is widely available as a dietary supplement. However, the jury is out to whether taken by mouth the substance can cross the blood-brain barrier. Luscher and his colleagues did have a huge success in giving patients a small dose of Ketamine, a vitamin shown to stimulate glutamine receptors and GABA function. In less than an hour, patients reported feeling energized, yet calm as if they were “waking up”. These and other studies look like promising ways to help treat anxiety and depression.

GABA DEFICIENCIES LINKED TO:

Anxiety

Depression

Autism Spectrum Disorder

Schizophrenia

Bipolar Disorder

Epilepsy

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