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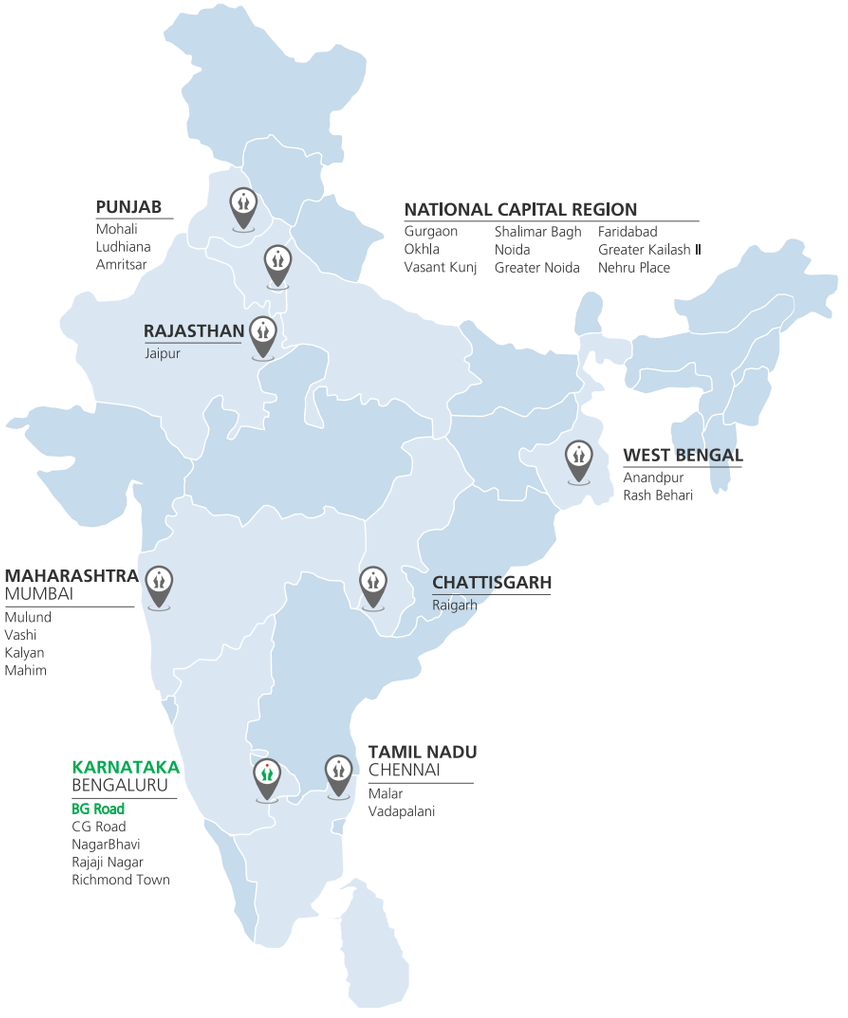

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SOCIAL ANXIETY DISORDER

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1 WHAT IS SOCIAL ANXIETY DISORDER?

Social anxiety disorder is characterized by an irrational and excessive fear of embarrassment and public humiliation. This fear may be tied to common actions such as public speaking, eating a meal, writing a cheque, or using a public restroom. As a result, individuals suffering from this condition avoid such social situations. Social Anxiety Disorder is different from just being shy.

- From 3 to 13% of people in the world have this condition sometime in their lives
- This disorder does not go away by itself and can get in the way of day-to-day life
- Most people with social anxiety disorder are not aware that they have a treatable disorder

2 WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF SOCIAL ANXIETY DISORDER?

People who have social anxiety disorder

- Are anxious when they are the focus of attention, even if it's for a short time
- Have high anxiety or even a panic attack at the thought of being in a social situation
- Worry other people will notice how nervous they are
- Are afraid of unfamiliar places and stay away from them
- Are unable to work or participate in school or social activities because of the fear of doing something embarrassing

3 WHAT CAUSES SOCIAL ANXIETY DISORDER?

Both genetic and environmental factors may play a part in Social Anxiety Disorder. Social anxiety disorder tends to run in families.

4 HOW IS IT TREATED?

- **Cognitive retraining -** to replace negative thoughts with more positive ones and exert control over the fear.
- **Assertiveness training -** to enhance self-confidence.
- **Support groups -** to provide exposure to non-threatening social situations
- **Relaxation techniques -** deep muscle relaxation to reduce anxiety

5 ARE MEDICATIONS REQUIRED?

Anti-anxiety medicines have been found to be effective in treating social anxiety disorder. A number of medicines that were originally approved for treatment of depression have also been found to be effective for anxiety disorders.

For any queries, write in to us at mentalhealth@fortishealthcare.com