

When we look at the effects of a sudden outpouring of adrenaline, we can see that they can include a highly unpleasant experience with some emotional component.

This is not to suggest that the attacks are emotional in origin, rather the reverse, that the physical (physiological) disturbance has emotional effects.

It is easy for this to be misconstrued by both the sufferer and their medical staff, especially in the context of a chronic, unremitting illness and sometimes an element of depression which is an entirely reasonable response to the situation.

Whether or not panic attacks are triggered by physical responses, it is vital to realise that they are, whilst frightening (adrenaline was designed to have that effect) they are not life-threatening.

However, if anyone is experiencing regular attacks, it may be worthwhile checking out current medication and also assessing any possible physiological causes, before assuming that these are an expected feature of the psychological effects of chronic illness.

I will be addressing psychological aspects of panic attacks in future articles.