Pyromania Encyclopedia Article

Pyromania

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Contents

Pyromania Encyclopedia Article.....1

Contents.....2

Pyromania.....3

Pyromania

Irresistible urge to start fires.

Little is known about pyromania. The term comes from the Greek words *pyr* (fire) and *mania* (madness). It is a rare condition, listed under the heading of **impulse control disorders.** Pyromania is not the same as arson (deliberate fire-setting), and not all arsonists (fire-setters) are pyromaniacs. Fires are often started by individuals with this disorder deliberately and with careful planning, rather than by accident. A key feature of this disorder is the presence of repeated association with fire, but with no evidence of a reason or motivation for the fire (such as profit or to hide criminal activity). Nearly all pyromaniacs are male. Pyromania may begin in childhood, but there is no conclusive data regarding the typical age of onset. Similarly, there is no documented link between fire-setting in childhood and adult pyromania.

See Also

Impulse Control Disorders

For Further Study

Books

Morrison, James. *DSM-IV Made Easy: The Clinician's Guide to Diagnosis.* New York: Guilford Press, 1995.