

Depression and its Side Effects

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LETTER

Depression is a mental illness characterised by a persistent sense of melancholy and loss of interest. It's not the same as the mood swings that everyone goes through on a daily basis. Depression is a long-term issue, not a blip on the radar. It is made up of episodes with symptoms that last at least two weeks. Depression can endure weeks, months, or even years.

Depression is a widespread ailment that affects 3.8 % of the world's population, with 5.0 % of adults and 5.7% of persons over 60 year's old suffering from depression. Around 280 million people worldwide suffer from depression. Depression is distinct from normal mood swings and short-term emotional responses to ordinary difficulties. Depression can be dangerous to one's health, especially if it is persistent and has a moderate or severe intensity. It can make the individual who is affected suffer severely and perform poorly at job, school, and in the family. Every year, around 700,000 people die by suicide. Suicide is the fourth highest cause of death among those aged 15 to 29.

CAUSES

The medical community does not have a complete understanding of depression's causes. There are many probable reasons, and symptoms are occasionally triggered by a combination of situations. The following are some of the factors that are likely to play a role:

- genetic characteristics
- changes in neurotransmitter levels in the brain environmental variables
- social and psychological variables
- Bipolar disorder, for example, is an extra ailment.

SYMPTOMS AND PATTERNS

A depressive episode lasts at least two weeks and is marked by a depressed mood (feeling sad, irritated, or empty) or a loss of pleasure or interest in activities for the majority of the day, practically every day. Poor focus, feelings of excessive guilt or low self-worth, hopelessness about the future, thoughts of dying or

suicide, disrupted sleep, changes in food or weight, and feeling especially weary or low in energy are all possible symptoms.

Specific persons may show their mood swings more readily in the form of physiological symptoms in some cultural circumstances (e.g. pain, fatigue, weakness). These physical symptoms, on the other hand, are not caused by another medical disease.

A depressive episode is classified as mild, moderate or severe based on the quantity and intensity of symptoms as well as the influence on the individual's ability to function.

CONTRIBUTING FACTORS AND PREVENTION

A complex combination of social, psychological, and biological factors leads to depression. People who have experienced adversity in their lives (such as unemployment, bereavement, or traumatic experiences) are more prone to depression. Depression can lead to increased stress and dysfunction, worsening the affected person's life situation as well as the depression. Depression and physical health have a symbiotic relationship. School-based programmes to improve a pattern of positive coping in children and adolescents are effective community methods to preventing depression. Interventions for parents of children with behavioural issues may help to lessen parental depression and enhance their children's outcomes. Exercise programmes for the elderly can also be beneficial in preventing depression.

DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT

Health-care providers may recommend psychological treatments such as behavioural activation, cognitive behavioural therapy, and interpersonal psychotherapy, as well as antidepressant medication such as selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs) and tricyclic antidepressants, depending on the severity and pattern of depressive episodes over time (TCAs). Individual and/or group face-to-face psychological treatments offered by experts and supervised lay therapists are among the several treatment forms to choose. For moderate depression, antidepressants are not the primary line of treatment. They should not be used to treat depression in children, and they should not be used as the first line of treatment in teenagers, who should be treated with special caution.

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