

Depression – know the types, symptoms , risk factors and treatment

Harmanpreet kaur

Healing hands physiotherapy clinic and rehab center Punjab, India

Abstract

INTRODUCTION

Depression is the principal cause of illness and disability in the world. Depression (major depressive disorder) is a common and serious medical illness that negatively affects how you feel, the way you think and how you act. Depression Is Different From Sadness or Grief/ Bereavement. The death of a loved one, loss of a job or the ending of a relationship are difficult experiences for a person to endure. It is normal for feelings of sadness or grief to develop in response to such situations. Those experiencing loss often might describe themselves as being “depressed.”[1]

But being sad is not the same as having depression. The grieving process is natural and unique to each individual and shares some of the same features of depression. Both grief and depression may involve intense sadness and withdrawal from usual activities. They are also different in important ways:

In grief, painful feelings come in waves, often intermixed with positive memories of the deceased. In major depression, mood and/or interest (pleasure) are decreased for most of two weeks.

In grief, self-esteem is usually maintained. In major depression, feelings of worthlessness and self-loathing are common.[2]

RISK FACTORS OF DEPRESSION

Depression can affect anyone—even a person who appears to live in relatively ideal circumstances.

Several factors can play a role in depression:

1.Biochemistry: Differences in certain chemicals in the brain may contribute to symptoms of depression.

2.Genetics: Depression can run in families. For example, if one identical twin has depression, the other has a 70 percent chance of having the illness sometime in life.

3.Personality: People with low self-esteem, who are easily overwhelmed by stress, or who are generally pessimistic appear to be more likely to experience depression.

4.Environmental factors: Continuous exposure to violence, neglect, abuse or poverty may make some people more vulnerable to depression. [3,4]

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***Corresponding author:** Healing hands physiotherapy clinic and rehab center Punjab, India. Email: drharmanpreetkaurheer@gmail.com

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CAUSES OF DEPRESSION

The causes of depression are not completely understood, but it's believed that there are several key factors, including genetics and environment, that make a person more likely to become depressed.

Some common causes of depression are-

A family history of depression (especially a parent or sibling)

- Experiencing a traumatic event or major life change (such as loss of a job, death or serious illness of a spouse, divorce)
- Financial troubles (such as debt and worries about paying for big expenses)
- Being very ill or injured (such as from cancer or a car accident), needing to have surgery or undergo medical treatment, or having to manage a chronic and/or progressive health condition (such as multiple sclerosis)
- Caring for a loved one (spouse, child, parent) who has a major illness, injury, or disability
- Taking certain medications that can cause symptoms associated with depression (including medications used to treat depression)
- Using illegal drugs and/or misusing alcohol

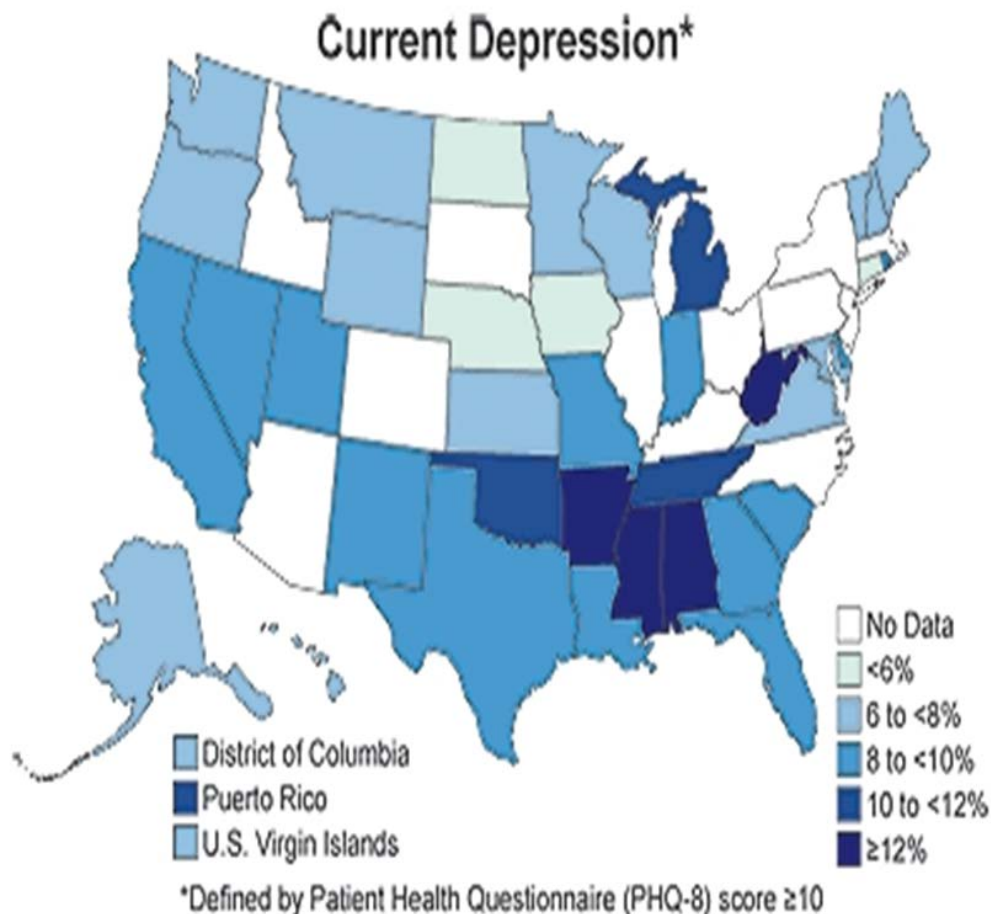
If you have experienced a form of depression before, you may be more likely to experience it again or develop another form in response to certain stressors or life changes (such as having a baby). [5]

SYMPTOMS OF DEPRESSION

Depression symptoms can vary from mild to severe and can include:

1. Feeling sad or having a depressed mood
2. Loss of interest or pleasure in activities once enjoyed
3. Changes in appetite — weight loss or gain unrelated to dieting
4. Trouble sleeping or sleeping too much
5. Loss of energy or increased fatigue
6. Increase in purposeless physical activity (e.g., inability to sit still, pacing, handwringing) or slowed movements or speech (these actions must be severe enough to be observable by others)
7. Feeling worthless or guilty
8. Difficulty thinking, concentrating or making decisions
9. Thoughts of death or suicide

Symptoms must last at least two weeks and must represent a change in your previous level of functioning for



a diagnosis of depression.

Also, medical conditions (e.g., thyroid problems, a brain tumor or vitamin deficiency) can mimic symptoms of depression so it is important to rule out general medical causes.[6]

PREVALENCE

Depression affects an estimated one in 15 adults (6.7%) in any given year. And one in six people (16.6%) will experience depression at some time in their life. Depression can occur at any time, but on average, first appears during the late teens to mid-20s. Women are more likely than men to experience depression. Some Studies charting the prevalence of depression among children and adolescents report high percentages of youngsters in both groups with depressive symptoms.[7]

TYPES OF DEPRESSION

Along with major depression, there are several other types of depression, which are characterized by their symptoms or causes:

1. **Dysthymia**, or persistent depressive disorder, is a milder form of depression in which symptoms last for at least two years.

2. **Postpartum depression** involves feelings of extreme sadness, fatigue, and anxiety that start after a woman gives birth.

3. **Premenstrual dysphoric disorder (PMDD)** is severe depression, irritability, and anxiety that occurs in the week or two before a woman's period.

4. **Seasonal affective disorder (SAD)** is depression that occurs during the winter months and is relieved by the change of season.

5. **Bipolar disorder**, formerly called manic depression, is characterized by alternating episodes of extremely low mood (depression) and exuberant highs (mania).

6. **Psychotic depression** includes features of both depression and psychosis, such as having false beliefs (delusions) or seeing and hearing things that are not there (hallucinations).[7,8]

DIAGNOSIS

A health professional should conduct a thorough diagnostic evaluation, including an interview and a physical examination. In some cases, a blood test might be done to make sure the depression is not due to a medical condition like a thyroid problem or a vitamin deficiency (reversing the medical cause would alleviate the depression-like symptoms). The evaluation will identify specific symptoms and explore medical and family histories as well as cultural and environmental factors with the goal of arriving at a diagnosis and planning a course of action.[9]

TREATMENT

Depression is among the most treatable of mental disorders. Between 80% and 90% percent of people with

depression eventually respond well to treatment. Almost all patients gain some relief from their symptoms.[10]

Medication:

One of the first-line treatments for clinical depression is medication. There are several different types of antidepressants, however, those belonging to a class called selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs) are the most frequently prescribed. The current speed of progress in depression research is simply remarkable. Peciña et al. have reviewed a growing body of research indicating that the endogenous opioid system is directly involved in the regulation of mood and is dysregulated in MDD [11]. Halikere et al. provide evidence that addiction associated N40D mu-opioid receptor variant modulates synaptic function in human neurons [12]. An additional new antidepressant target is pursued by Tan et al. who studied a promising novel pharmaceutical target, the KCNQ-type potassium channel, which may exert a therapeutic effect via functional changes within the brain reward system, including the ventral striatum [13]Tan A, et al. Effects of the KCNQ channel opener ezogabine on functional connectivity of the ventral striatum and clinical symptoms in patients with major depressive disorder.

PSYCHOTHERAPY

Psychotherapy, or "talk therapy," is sometimes used alone for treatment of mild depression; for moderate to severe depression, psychotherapy is often used along with antidepressant medications. Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) has been found to be effective in treating depression. CBT is a form of therapy focused on the problem solving in the present. CBT helps a person to recognize distorted/negative thinking with the goal of changing thoughts and behaviors to respond to challenges in a more positive manner." is sometimes used alone for treatment of mild depression; for moderate to severe depression, psychotherapy is often used along with antidepressant medications. Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) has been found to be effective in treating depression. CBT is a form of therapy focused on the problem solving in the present. CBT helps a person to recognize distorted/negative thinking with the goal of changing thoughts and behaviors to respond to challenges in a more positive manner.[14]

ELECTROCONVULSIVE THERAPY (ECT)

Electroconvulsive Therapy (ECT) is a medical treatment that has been most commonly reserved for patients with severe major depression who have not responded to other treatments. It involves a brief electrical stimulation of the brain while the patient is under anesthesia. A patient typically receives ECT two to three times a week for a total of six to 12 treatments. It is usually managed by a team of trained medical professionals including a psychiatrist, an anesthesiologist and a nurse or physician assistant. ECT has been used since the 1940s, and many years of research have led to major improvements and the recognition of its effectiveness as a mainstream rather than a "last resort" treatment. [14,15]

PHYSIOTHERAPY FOR DEPRESSION

Regular exercise helps create positive feeling and improves mood.

Physiotherapists are trained for treating people with depression. Physiotherapy treatment will improve your physical wellbeing by:

1. Increasing energy levels and physical fitness
2. Relieving muscle tension and pain
3. Improving quality of sleep
4. Improving posture
5. Enhancing motivation and self-esteem
6. Maximising physical potential and getting you back to your social activities

Physiotherapist will initially assess your symptoms in order to develop a rehabilitation programme that is right for you. Physiotherapy treatment may include:

1. Structured exercise programme - exercise can make you feel better about yourself. Increasing the amount of exercise that you do can trigger the release of the brain chemical serotonin, which boosts your mood. Exercise will also improve cardiovascular endurance and help you maintain a healthy weight.

2. Joint mobilisation and stretching to lengthen stiff muscles and relieve painful joints.

3. Relaxation techniques such as breathing control and positions of ease.

4. Hydrotherapy to reduce pain and stretch muscles. [14,15,16]

OUTLOOK:

Depression is highly treatable. Up to 90 percent of people will eventually improve with medication, therapy, a combination of the two, or another treatment. However, it can take some trial and error to find the therapy that works best for you. Help is available for people who are struggling with depression through the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) helpline at 1-800-662-HELP (4357).

Suicidal thoughts and actions can occur in people who are severely depressed. If you are thinking about hurting yourself, call a trusted health care provider right away, reach out to supportive friends or family members, or call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255). If you are at immediate risk for self-harm, dial 911 or local emergency services. [17]