What is Depression?

Symptoms of a Depressive Episode

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Depressed mood</th>
<th>Loss of interest or pleasure</th>
<th>Significant weight change</th>
<th>Diminished concentration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sleep difficulties</td>
<td>Fatigue nearly every day</td>
<td>Feelings of worthlessness</td>
<td>Recurring thoughts of death</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Symptoms must cause significant distress. Symptoms must last for at least two weeks.

Demographics

- Women are 2x more likely to develop depression.
- About 1 in 10 people will experience depression during their lifetime.
- Most people experience their first depressive episode between ages 20 and 30.

Risks for Depression

- Family history of depression or similar disorders.
- Poverty, unemployment, social isolation, and other stressful life events.
- Regular drug and alcohol use.

Psychotherapy

(Cognitive Behavioral Therapy)

- CBT works by changing self-defeating thoughts and behaviors.
- CBT has been found to be equally, if not more effective than medicine in many cases.
- CBT is the most researched form of psychotherapy for depression.

Medication

(Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors)

- SSRIs increase the level of serotonin (a chemical related to depression) in the brain.
- Studies suggest that SSRIs are the most effective when used to treat severe depression.
- SSRIs don't work overnight—it might take up to 6 weeks before they reach their full effect.

A combination of both psychotherapy and medication has been found to be the most effective treatment for depression.

Other Facts

- Over ½ of those diagnosed with depression also suffer from anxiety.
- 66% of those who commit suicide suffer from depression or a related mood disorder.
- Physical exercise has been found to have a significant antidepressant effect.
- Depressive episodes also occur during bipolar disorder alongside manic episodes.

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