
Depression (Depressive Disorder)

Hello darkness my old friend...

In 30 AD, the Roman physician Celsus described Melancholia (from Greek "melan", meaning black and "chole" meaning bile

~~~~~

**\*Depression is in the "Mood Disorders" category of clinical conditions characterized by a loss of a sense of control and a subjective experience of great distress.**

---

• **I. Types of depression:**

•

• **1. Unipolar:**

•

• \*Major depressive disorder (1 episode or recurring—has the highest lifetime prevalence, almost 17%, of any psychiatric disorder)

•

• \*Minor depressive disorder (brief or long)

• \*Dysthymic disorder –dysthymia (at least 2 years' low grade depression)

• \*Seasonal affective disorder (SAD)

---

**2. Bipolar:**

\*Bipolar I Disorder: includes mania and can include depression

\*Bipolar II Disorder: depressive episodes/hypomania without full manic episode

\*Cyclothymia (at least 2 years of depressive and hypomanic symptoms not severe enough to be full mania or major depression.

\*

***\*King Saul in the Old Testament describes a depressive syndrome***

---

---

## Long Enough

(from *The Darkling Poems*)

And then one day  
*missing* becomes your body.  
Words dry up,  
your parched mouth cracked, unmovable.  
Your soul still goes  
through the motions of caring,  
but the deep breath of genuine feeling  
lacks oxygen.  
You gasp for meaning,  
count the limbs  
of this *missing* you've become—  
ghost limbs now,  
severed from mother tree.  
Hollow bones. No calcium.  
No animating marrow  
to help stand you up  
long enough to tell someone,  
***it hurts—***  
***come hold me.***

Kate Aver Avraham, 10/23/12

---

---

## **II. Symptoms of depression:**

- \*Loss of interest or loss of pleasure in usual activities or all activities
- \*Change in appetite and/or weight (gain or loss)
- \*Sleep disturbances
- \*Lack of energy
- \*Fatigue
- \*Feeling agitated or feeling slowed down
- \*Feeling “frozen” emotionally, heavy, sensation; unable to cry
- \*Feelings of low self- esteem, feelings of guilt
- \*Difficulty concentrating, thinking clearly or making decisions
- \*Recurring thoughts of death or suicide

***\*About two thirds of all depressed patients contemplate suicide and 10 to 15 percent commit suicide!!***

## **III. Psychosocial factors contributing to depression:**

- \*Trauma, at an early age (i.e. abuse) or later in life.
- \*Life circumstances like relationship changes; loss of loved one; financial stress including loss of job; family stress,
- \*Genetics (mood disorders tend to run in families)
- \*Medical conditions: like chronic illness or pain; hypothyroidism; post- partum or other hormonal changes
- \*Drug and alcohol abuse

***\*Women are two times as likely to develop depression than men***

***\*Depression affects all ages, including children and adolescents; it also affects people of all racial groups.***

***\*Depression is more common in older persons than it is in the general population.***

***\*An untreated depressive episode usually lasts 6 to 13 months; most treated episodes last about 3 months.***

***\*Major depressive disorder tends to be chronic and relapse common. Patients who have been hospitalized for a first episode have about a 50% chance of recovering in the first year.***

## **IV. Treatments for depression:**

*next page →*

# Treatments:

**1. Medications: antidepressants; mood stabilizers; antipsychotic meds**

**2. Psychotherapy:**

- \* Cognitive therapy
- \* Interpersonal therapy
- \* Behavioral therapy

*\*Most people receive maximum recovery benefit from a combination of psychotherapy and medications.*

**3. Hospitalization:** The most critical decision a physician must make for a patient and is based on many factors including duration and severity of illness, response or lack of response to treatment, risk of suicide or danger to others.

**4. Exercise/ healthy diet :**(can help with prevention & mild to moderate cases

**5. Alternative approaches:** Including light therapy (light box/full spectrum light); acupuncture, massage and other body work; meditation, etc.

**6. Brain stimulation therapies: (can be tried when psychotherapy and/or medication is not effective.)**

1. rTMS: Repetitive transcranial magnetic stimulation

2. ECT: Electroconvulsive therapy (the fastest and most effective available therapy for severe cases of major depressive disorder, mania, psychosis. Advances in this form of treatment over the years make it a viable choice that some physicians think is not offered soon enough or utilized often enough due to potential side effects like temporary memory loss.

*“In the middle of the journey of our life  
I found myself in a dark wood  
For I had lost the right path”*

*~~Dante*

*THEN, recovery... “And so we came forth, and once again beheld the stars”*

---

## Awakening

*"E quindi uscimmo a rivedar le stelle."  
(and so we came forth and once again beheld the stars)  
~Dante*

Morning, joyous, I imagine  
a wide, silver ribbon stretched  
across the eastern sky,  
pull on it once, hard,  
expose a luminescent day  
given without condition-  
messenger of what light can do  
inside you-- against the long darkness,  
the mock night you were in  
eyes closed tightly for so long.

Open your eyes  
into all the light of a first day  
waiting patiently  
along the bobbing sea  
along a glistening band  
of tomorrow and tomorrow.

Kate Aver Avraham