

MAJOR DEPRESSIVE DISORDER



MDAM
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ASSOCIATION OF MANITOBA
WESTMAN

Helping People Help Themselves

Compiled by 2023 Green Team

What is Major Depressive Disorder?

Major depressive disorder is a mood disorder characterized by persistent melancholy and a loss of interest. Depression, also known as depression or clinical depression, affects how a person feels, thinks, and acts and can contribute to a variety of emotional and physical problems. You may have difficulty performing normal day-to-day activities, and you may occasionally feel that life is not worth living. (Sawchuk, 2022)

General Symptoms

While it is possible for depression to manifest as a single occurrence during the course of an individual's lifetime, it is more common for individuals to experience many episodes of depression. During these episodes, symptoms manifest for a significant portion of the day, occurring on an almost daily basis, and may encompass the following: (Sawchuk, 2022)

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- Feelings of sadness, tearfulness, emptiness or hopelessness
- Angry outbursts, irritability or frustration, even over small matters
- Loss of interest or pleasure in most or all normal activities, such as sex, hobbies or sports
- Sleep disturbances, including insomnia or sleeping too much
- Tiredness and lack of energy, so even small tasks take extra effort
- Reduced appetite and weight loss or increased cravings for food and weight gain
- Anxiety, agitation or restlessness

MDD Symptoms in Children and Teens

Major depressive disorder (MDD) is a common mental disorder observed in children and adolescents. However, due to the differences in symptom presentation compared to the diagnostic criteria for adults, it is frequently overlooked and not well addressed (Mullen, 2018). The symptoms of depression in children and teens include:

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Children

- Feelings of persistent sadness or irritability
- Loss of enthusiasm or enjoyment in all or almost all activities once enjoyed
- Feeling helpless or hopeless
- Low self-esteem
- Feeling unworthy
- Excessive guilt

(The Childrens Hospital of Philadelphia, 2014)

Teens

- Persistent feelings of despair
- Low self-esteem
- Despair, helplessness, and/or guilt
- Feelings of inadequacy
Feelings of wanting to die or already wanting to be dead.
- Conflict in relationships
- Sleep issues, including insomnia
- Changes in hunger or weight

(Sanford Medicine, 2019)

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MDD Symptoms in Adults

Major depressive disorder in adults unfortunately often goes undiagnosed and untreated in older adults, and they may feel reluctant to seek help because of stigma. Some of the symptoms includes:

- Feelings of sadness, tearfulness
- Emptiness or hopelessness
- Angry outbursts, irritability or frustration
- Loss of interest or pleasure in most or all normal activities
- Sleep disturbances, including insomnia or sleeping too much
- Tiredness and lack of energy

(Sawchuk, 2022)

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When To See a Doctor

Make an appointment to see your doctor or mental health professional if you feel these symptoms for 2 weeks or more or think you may be struggling with depression.

Causes

It is important to remember that anyone can develop depression at any stage of their life. As with many mood disorders, the cause of MDD is also unknown. However, a variety of factors may be involved (Sawchuk, 2022). Such as:

- Medical condition
- Side effect from medications
- Substance abuse
- Hormone imbalance
- Genetic factors
- Lack of support or social isolation
- Emotional stress
- Traumatic events (like the death of a loved one)

(Sawchuk, 2022)

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Risk Factors

MDD is diagnosed in more women than men, but this may be because women are more likely to seek treatment. Some factors that seem to increase the risk of developing depression include (Sawchuk, 2022):

- Traumatic or stressful events, such as physical or sexual abuse, a passing of a loved one, a problematic relationship, or financial difficulties
- Blood relatives with a history of depression, bipolar disorder, or suicide
- Anxiety disorder, eating disorders, or post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
- Alcoholic or substance abuse
- Serious or persistent illness, such as cancer, stroke, chronic pain, or heart disease

(Sawchuk, 2022)

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Complications

Examples of complications associated with major depressive disorder include:

- Pain or physical illness
- Self-harm
- Substance misuse
- Eating too much or too little
- Anxiety
- Thoughts related to suicide
- Social phobia
- Family conflicts

(Sawchuk, 2022)

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Prevention and What Might Help

Major Depressive Disorder often becomes worse if left untreated. Always seek the advice of a clinician if the depression is pervasive and persists for more than 2 weeks.

Some interventions may include:

- Consult your clinician
- Medications
- Therapy or counseling
- Peer support groups
- Electroconvulsive Therapy - Involves electronic stimulation
- Ketamine treatment

(Cleveland Clinic , n.d.)

References

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