

Lesser Known Symptoms of Depression Everyone Should Be Aware Of

Did you know that about 66% of the 350 million people suffering from depression do not get treatment? Some experts put the figure at 80%. About 17 million Americans are suffering from this mental illness, and nine million may have clinical depression. Women are twice as likely to suffer from depression as men. However, men are at increased risk when their levels of testosterone are reduced in middle age.

People suffer from depression when certain emotional and physical needs are missing. It is fascinating to look at the Kaluli tribe in New Guinea, where depression simply does not exist. Their society is built on mutual help and support. This is what is missing in our modern society, and the effects have been devastating and costly. It is the price we pay for a highly individualistic mentality.

“Here is the tragedy: when you are the victim of depression, not only do you feel utterly helpless and abandoned by the world, you also know that very few people can understand, or even begin to believe, that life can be this painful.” – Giles Andreae

If you or a loved one suspect that you might be suffering from some form of depression, it is important to know what the symptoms are so that you can then get the necessary help and treatment.

Symptoms of depression can be physical

People associate depression with a low mood and other classic mental issues. But with depression, the body suffers, and many physical symptoms start to appear. Depressed people are less liable to follow a diet, take medicine or participate in exercise, which exacerbates the situation.

Inexplicable headaches and pain

One of the pointers indicating depression may be aches and pains which cannot be explained by any other physical condition. There may be headaches, lower back pain, abdominal pain, joint and neck problems. It is as if depression leaves large footprints all over your body. Many patients report that physical pain is the main symptom, or at least the first sign that they are suffering from depression.

The explanation may be that the nerve pathways governed by the neurotransmitters such as serotonin are also involved in our physical sensations. This would explain why sleeping and eating habits are affected by depression.

One psychiatrist has remarked that as many as 50% of undiagnosed cases of depression may be those who are not reporting a depressed mood at all.

Sleep patterns are disturbed

Up to 75% of depressed patients suffer from insomnia and other sleep problems. Experts have noted that sleep patterns or sleep architecture are manifestly altered in depression. Quality of life is affected and may lead to more depression symptoms. It is a sort of vicious circle.

Fatigue and loss of energy

These symptoms could be at the root of many chronic illnesses and diseases. Loss of energy and feelings of apathy may just be the tip of the iceberg. Early morning waking and feeling exhausted plus difficulty getting back to sleep are also related to depression.

Many elderly patients suffer from loss of control over their lives because of failing physical health. This starts a negative emotional spiral which can lead to isolation and apathy.

Weight issues

Weight issues as a symptom of depression can range from binge eating to starvation diets. Those who are obese are at greater risk for depression, and depressed patients are also more likely to becoming overweight. This was the conclusion after 15 studies reported in the *Archives of General Psychiatry*. Loss of energy, poor sleep and apathy add to the risk.

To read more about weight issues and emotional issue, you can check out *Emotional Eating: What You Need To Know Before Starting Another Diet* by Edward Abramson.

Apathy and hopelessness

Many patients feel that they have no interest in any of the activities they used to enjoy. This is coupled with feelings of hopelessness and helplessness. There is also a feeling that life is simply not worth living.

“Depression can seem worse than terminal cancer, because most cancer patients feel loved and they have hope and self-esteem.” – David D. Burns

Doom and gloom

Depressed patients are miserable and down most of the time. Sometimes there is also anxiety and negative thoughts. These are the result of the patient’s beliefs, ethics and behavior. They buzz around in the head like irritating insects. When depression is the cause, these thoughts take over and can paralyze the one suffering. Part of any depression treatment will be learning to let go of these thoughts.

“Our life is what our thoughts make it.” – Marcus Aurelius

And many more symptoms...

Depression covers a multitude of symptoms, and everybody seems to have a different set. It is perfectly normal to feel sad or dejected after a disappointment. Bereavement and illness may also pull you down. Loneliness and financial worries can all play a part. It is however when these symptoms I have listed above start taking over your whole existence that it may be time to ask for help.

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