



## Depression 憂鬱症(英文)

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### Understanding Depression

Depression is one of the three well known diseases of the 21st Century, about every 3/100

person has depression. Everyone has 10 - 15 % chances of getting this disease, therefore, there are about 10 thousand and 21 million people suffering from this disease worldwide, yet only 5 % are receiving treatment. Not only is depression affecting personal emotions severely, it is also harmful to our physical condition and cognitive function. Great damages are done to the academic achievements, occupational function, family and interpersonal relationships. However, we somehow manage to ignore it either consciously or subconsciously.

Depression is classified into 5 categories: major depression, dysthymic disorder, bipolar disorder, post-partum depression and depression with atypical features; each with different criteria to meet. There is information regarding depression wherever we go, it' s easy for one to worry whether he /she has depression, but being depressed doesn' t mean you have depression. To know if one has depression, one needs to be carefully interviewed and diagnosed by a psychiatrist.

### Depression Symptoms

1. Emotion : depressed, sad, unhappy, loss of interest, irritable, anxious, easily agitated.
2. Cognitive function : pessimism, worthlessness, helplessness, hopelessness, ambivalence, memory impairment, poor concentration, low self-esteem, self-blame, suicide ideation, psychomotor retardation, guilt delusions and hallucinations.

3. Physical : decreased sexual drive, increased/decreased appetite, lack of energy, fatigue, insomnia, hypersomnia ,etc...

4. Behavior : taciturn speech, motor retardation, agitation or retardation, sometimes with suicidal behavior.

## Clinical picture of Depression

Speaking generally, a depressive episode lasts about 6-13 months, if adequate treatment is given; major improvement maybe seen in 80% of the patients within 3-8 weeks, only 20% of the patient may become chronic.

## New Views of Treating Depression

The principle of the treatment is to tailor the treatment according to the patient' s main problems, after carefully examined and diagnosed by the doctor. The mainstay of the treatment include:

### 1.Pharmacotherapy :

Many patients need to be treated with medication. Antidepressants need to be continually taken for 2-3 weeks according to the doctor' s advices, before it becomes effective. Self-adjustment or self-discontinuation of the medication is not supported.

Furthermore, some people might have discomfort after taking the medication, may it be reminded that most of the discomfort/side effects are transient, and self-adjustment or self-discontinuation of the medication would not be necessary; since it might affect the effectiveness of the treatment. However, if the discomfort concerns you greatly, please feel free to discuss with your doctor for adjustments in medication.

### 2.Psychotherapy:

Reducing the emotion and psychological discomfort caused by depression,helping in acknowledgement of the somatic discomforts and hardship after having being diagnosed with depression.

### 3.Group therapy:

Support and advices are offered, along with an improvement in solving psychological conflicts, and to help increase motivation.

### 4.Behavior therapy :

To release the tension through simple and easy-to-do techniques.

### 5.Muscle relaxation exercises:

Improves the level of anxiety and symptoms of hyperventilation.

## Help yourself

1. Obtain appropriate diagnosis and adequate treatment and discuss treatment plans with medical staff.
- 2. Divides the tasks into small parts, arrange them according to priority, and be sure to balance with one's own capability.
- 3. Don't assume the depressive state will change in a second, and don't blame yourself if you can't perform the task.
- 4. Try not to accept negative and irrational thoughts.
- 5. Participate in activities that you are comfortable with, slow down your pace, share your feelings with friends and relatives, adjusting your emotions from time to time.
- 6. Participate in related support groups and receive help when needed.
- 7. Keep a balanced life style and find hobbies that suit you.

## How family member can help with depressive patients

1. Assist in receiving medical care and taking medication : Depression is actually similar to a flu that the brain gets, it's a biological disease that will recover after treatment, the earlier the treatment was given, and the less damage will be done to the brain.
2. Listen and support : Many depression patients didn't intend to express or act they way they did; they are a part of the consequences due to the disease. This is also one of the etiologies for the never ending family conflicts. Thus, in order to help these depression patients, getting to know them is a must, more caring and forgiveness, less complaints and criticisms.
3. Assist in helping the patient to accept the fact he/she's sick, while not pushing it out of proportion. One of the etiologies for relapses is that family and patient can't accept that the patient is sick and stopped treatment on their own. This is something we wouldn't want see happening.