

# Depression: Where Does It Start?

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*Where does depression come from- is it spiritual , mental, or emotional? Or a combination of all? How do you know if medication is necessary? And how does demonic oppression play into all of that?*

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## **Stats about Depression:**

- Depression is a physical illness of the most important organ in your body, your brain. In any given year 18-20 million adults in the U.S. will suffer from depression. Essentially every person, during their lifetime, will be affected by depression - either their own or someone else's. Depression and its related disorders are on the rise with children and adolescents particularly hard hit.
- Sadly, over half the population believes depression is a personal weakness and 80% of people with depression are not currently receiving any treatment. 15% of people with severe depression, if untreated, will die by suicide.
- When people are depressed the body suffers. People with depression have higher rates of diabetes mellitus, heart disease, strokes, high cholesterol, immune problems, pain problems, bone density problems and die at a younger age than people without depression.

- Depression interferes with the ability to effectively carry out one's life or goals and contributes to work problems, absenteeism, marital problems and parent-child problems. Children reared in homes with depressed mothers have significantly higher incidence of mental health problems than children reared in homes with mothers whose depression was appropriately treated.

### **Symptoms of Depression:**

Five or more of the following symptoms which persist on a daily basis for more than two weeks and represent a change from normal level of functioning

- Depressed mood
- Loss in interest, motivation or ability to experience joy or pleasure from activities
- Change in appetite either up or down
- Change in sleep either up or down
- Feelings of worthlessness or guilt
- Suicidal thinking or preoccupation with death
- Loss of energy, feeling fatigued
- Impairment in concentration
- Change in baseline motor activity

### **Causes of Depression:**

There are multiple contributing factors to depression but the final common pathway is a change in brain function with loss of brain tissue in critical brain regions resulting in the clinical syndrome recognized as Major Depression.

When a person is suffering from depression genes that make critical proteins that keep the brain healthy are turned off. Without these proteins neurons begin to wither and die. The glia, the white cells, which are the supporting cells to the neurons, are unhealthy in depression and don't provide the nutrients the neurons need contributing to more loss of both white cells and neurons. During depression glucose metabolism of the brain is decreased, electrical activity is decreased and the part of the brain where we do our critical thinking, reasoning, planning is suppressed and not working well. Simultaneously, the part of the brain that causes fear, anxiety, worry, dread and guilt is hyperactive causing increasing sense of emotional distress and dysphoria, which results in increased release of stress hormones from the body and a cascade of physiological problems throughout the body.

Factors that increase the risk of developing depression can be broken into two general categories, those that affect the brain tissue directly and those that affect the mind, the thinking processes of the brain.

### **Contributing factors to depression that affect the brain tissue:**

- Medical illness
  - Heart disease, cancer, AIDS, Diabetes Mellitus or any other chronic or terminal medical condition
- Nutritional deficiencies (folate, B vitamins, vitamin C, omega 3 fatty acids)
- Limited physical activity
- Alcohol and drugs use
- Pregnancy
- Northern hemisphere with decrease sunlight in winter

- Infections
  - HIV, Tertiary syphilis, prions, borna virus
- Toxins
  - Mercury, arsenic, lead, bismuth, industrial solvents/chemicals
- Hormonal irregularities
  - Thyroid, estrogen, progesterone, testosterone
- Brain injury/damage
- Sleep disorders
- Medications of various kinds
- Chronic pain states
- Brain diseases
  - Parkinson's disease
  - Alzheimer's diseases
  - Lou Gehrig's disease (ALS)
  - Pick's disease
  - Lewy body dementia

**Contributing factors to depression that affect the mind, our thought processes, which include spiritual issues:**

- Disconnected from God
- Unhealthy worship
- Violations of God's Law
- Isolation
- History of abuse
- Loss
- Unresolved guilt
- Unhealthy relationships
- Unhealthy thought patterns
- Persistent immoral, illegal, unethical activity
- Forgiveness issues
- Unremitting stress, real or imagined

**Treatment:**

Treatment starts with a thorough examination from a trained professional who is thinking not simply, is this person depressed, but, what are the contributing factors to depression. The treatment plan then involves addressing as many of the contributing factors as possible to remove, resolve or mitigate their impact. One of the ways antidepressant medications work is by turning the genes back on that make the critical proteins that keep the brain healthy with subsequent increase in brain tissue and neuron to neuron interconnections. The longer a person is depressed the more brain damage that occurs and the more difficult it is to resolve. The more quickly depression is treated and the more comprehensive the treatment plan, addressing as many of the contributing factors as possible, the better the long term outcome will be. If you or someone you know is suffering from depression first recognize it is a medical illness of the brain and not a moral weakness and second, get them to a professional for treatment as soon as possible.