

Mood Disorder: What do You Know About?

What is mood disorder?

Mood Disorders include a group of disorders which emotional mood and related disturbances dominate the picture. The syndromes of mood disorders encompass symptoms that affect the overall bodily systems. We experience a wide range of moods in control, more or less. However, in mood disorders the sense of control is lost, and there is a subjective experience of distress.

MAJOR DEPRESSIVE DISORDER

Major Depressive Disorder is a common disorder, with a lifetime prevalence of about 1 in 4 people. Depression can be understood as a spectrum condition. The symptoms of depression could be normally seen in people who are in bereavement (such as death or loss of a loved one); however at the other end of the spectrum, these symptoms significantly impair the daily functioning of a person. It may be the sign of a serious state of depression that requires professional help.

Causes of Depression:

There is no single cause of depression.

- Neurotransmitter Imbalance
 - Serotonin
 - Norepinephrine
 - Dopamine
- Genetic Predisposition Factor
- Psychosocial Factors:
Stressful and discouraging situations naturally overwhelm and have the potential to become serious.
Ex. Loss of a parent or spouse
 - Financial difficulties
 - Difficulties with job or personal relationship
 - Poor self-esteem
 - Seasonal or hormonal changes
 - Addictions

Symptoms of Depression

- Feelings of despair and hopelessness
- Feeling detached from life and those around you
- Continued fatigue or loss of energy
- Feelings of sadness – crying for no apparent reason
- Feeling irritated easily
- Inability to concentrate or indecisive
- Thoughts of suicide
- Changes in eating or sleeping patterns
- Persistent or recurring headaches or frequent gastrointestinal upsets
- Loss of interests

Treatment

The most common and successfully used treatments for depression are psychological counseling in combination with antidepressant medication. Support from family and friends are crucial to cope with the illness and recovery.

BIPOLAR DISORDER

People with these disorders may experience depressive episodes (feeling very "low") or manic episodes (feeling very "high"), or both. Bipolar illness often begins with a depression in adolescence or early adulthood, although the first manic episode may not occur until several years later.

Symptoms of Depression

During a manic episode, you may be abnormally happy, energetic, or irritable for a week or more. You may spend a lot of money, get involved in dangerous activities, and sleep is not desired. After a manic episode, you may return to normal, but your mood may swing in the opposite direction to feelings of sadness, depression, hopelessness and worthlessness. When you are depressed, you may have trouble concentrating, remembering, and making decisions; have changes in your eating and sleeping habits; and lose interest in things you once enjoyed.

- Extreme irritability and distractibility
- Excessive "high" or euphoric feelings
- Sustained period of unusual behavior
- Increased energy, activity, rapid talking & thinking, agitation
- Decreased need for sleep
- Unrealistic (grandiose) belief in one's own abilities
- Poor judgment, often including denial of a "problem"
- Increased sex drive
- Provocative or obnoxious behavior

Treatment

Bipolar disorder is mainly treated with medications to manage manic episodes and periods of depression. Counseling for you and your family is also an important treatment for bipolar disorder. If you suspect that you or your loved ones are being suffered from mood disorders, please do not delay to seek for professional help. Talk to your family doctor or consult with qualified mental health professionals, such as registered psychologist, psychiatrist, social worker, or counselor.

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