

## ***“Untreated Depression”***

### ***Depression: What is it?***

Depression, sometimes known as major depressive disorder, is a serious mental illness that affects a person's thoughts, feelings, behaviour. It is a prevalent mental illness.

A persistent sense of melancholy, a diminished interest in once-enjoyed activities, and the incapacity to perform everyday duties for longer than two weeks are the hallmarks of depression. Low energy, irregular appetite, sleep patterns (either more or less), anxiety, trouble concentrating, trouble making decisions, restlessness, feelings of hopelessness, guilt, or unworthiness, and suicide thoughts are some other symptoms.

Untreated clinical depression is a serious problem. Untreated depression increases the chance of risky behaviours such as drug or alcohol addiction. It also can ruin relationships, cause problems at work, and make it difficult to overcome serious illnesses.

### ***Untreated depression and physical health***

Clinical depression takes a serious toll on physical health. Findings indicate that individuals with serious depression who are mending from heart attacks or strokes struggle more to make decisions about their health care.

Depression itself is a well-established risk factor for stroke. In addition, depression is seen in at least 30–40% of survivors of stroke and post-stroke depression is known to slow functional rehabilitation.

### ***Untreated depression and sleep***

A shift in sleep patterns is one of the clearest signs of clinical depression. While insomnia, or the inability to obtain enough sleep, is the most prevalent issue, people might occasionally feel as though they need more sleep and lose a lot of energy.

Typical indications of sleeplessness include:

- Daytime exhaustion
- Intolerance and difficulties focusing
- Sleep that is never quite "enough"
- Having difficulty sleeping
- Difficulty returning to sleep following a nighttime awakening
- Awakening during the night at all times
- Getting out of bed before the alarm goes off

### ***Signs of untreated depression in men and women are different?***

Men who have untreated clinical depression may exhibit more anger, frustration, and violent behaviour than women. Men who suffer from untreated depression may also engage in risky behaviours like unsafe driving and indulging in unsafe sexual practices.

### ***Can untreated depression lead to suicide?***

Suicide risk is elevated in those with depression. Any individual who discloses thoughts or plans towards suicide ought to be treated with extreme caution.

Men commit almost 75% of suicides, even though twice as many women attempt it. Individuals over 60 years of age account for 40% of suicide victims. The regular loss of friends and loved ones as they age causes older persons to experience depression more frequently. Additionally, there is an increase in the number of chronic illnesses, significant life transitions like retirement, and the move into assisted living.

The **SAD PERSONS** is utilized as a mnemonic to determine risk of suicide:

**S** – sex male

**A** – age <19 or >45 years

**D** – depression

**P** – previous attempt

**E** – excess of alcohol or drug use

**R** – rational thinking loss

**S** – separated/ divorced or widowed

**O** – organised plan

**N** – no social support

Warning signs of suicide:

1. Talking, writing or thinking about hurting self
2. Having a “death wish”
3. Loss of interest in things one used to care about
4. Worthless, helpless and hopeless
5. Suddenly visiting or calling people one cares about
6. Sudden switch from being very sad to very calm or even cheerful
7. Writing a suicide note

8. Conducting on-line searches about suicide
9. Saying things like "it would be better if I wasn't here"

### ***Depression is considered a disability***

People with depression may become unable to function in their social, familial, and professional lives. Over 200 million workdays are missed annually due to untreated depression. A huge amount of money is spent each year on direct treatment, loss of productivity and job absence in untreated depression.

### ***Untreated depression affects families too***

A caregiver is a person who provides physical or psychological care to someone else. Caregivers help others who aren't able to help themselves fully on their own due to their declining health and mental illness.

The role of a caregiver could include:

- Helping with a daily routine like toileting, bathing, getting dressed or brushing hair.
- Preparing meals.
- Completing housework.
- Medication management.
- Managing finances.

It can be exceedingly challenging and unpleasant for friends and family to live with a depressed individual.

Caregiver burden can be defined as the strain or load borne by a person who cares for a chronically ill and disabled individual. Unmanaged caregiver burden can have a negative impact on relationships, health, and mental state of any caregiver. Ultimately, it

can cause burnout, which is characterized by emotional, mental, and physical tiredness.

Untreated depression comes with a fair share of caregiver burden. Thus, marital or even family therapy is indicated in some cases.

***Depression can be treated successfully***

More than 80% of people with clinical depression can be successfully treated with early recognition, intervention, and support. Psychotherapy, medicine, or a combination of the two are the most effective forms of depression treatment for most patients.

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