



Depression

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— Dr Ame Nasokia

A quick peek!

DEPRESSION is a common sickness which affects over 264 million people worldwide annually.

It is the leading cause of disability globally and a major contributor to the overall global burden of diseases.

It is seen to affect people of all age groups and socio-economic status but is more common in women compared to men.

Challenges in life bring about different moods and one of those is feeling sad or down when one faces a distraught situation.

For instance, when a loved one passes away, it is expected that the family will experience sadness, be in mourning, feel down and it could even affect one's productivity in society to an extent.

As for clinical depression, these responses are slightly more exaggerated, lasting more than two weeks and limiting one's role in society, school, work or in the household.

The manifestations can include feeling down or depressed, loss of interest and enjoyment, and reduced energy leading to diminished activity.

They can also have additional symptoms of disturbed sleep, appetite or concentration, feelings of guilt or low self-worth and even symptoms that cannot be explained by medical diagnosis.

Depression can be mild and just affecting one's daily mood but he or she is able to function well at home, perform in school or work or it can be severe where the risk of self-harm or suicide is high.

About 800,000 people die from suicide globally every year and it is the second leading cause of death in ages between 15 to 29 years.

The good news is that depression, whether it is mild, moderate or severe, is available in your health clinics or hospitals by your doctors.

One does not necessarily need to be referred to a psychiatric institution for treatment but can be seen regularly and be administered pharmacological or psychological therapy by their local physician.

Depression is just like any medical disease that gets treated in the hospitals and people do recover slowly.

Though the exact cause of this mental illness is not fully understood, it is believed to arise from a combination of interactions of various social, biological and psychological factors.

People who have gone through adverse events in life or have a family member with depression are more likely to develop depression.

There is also a theory of chemical imbalance such as serotonin, dopamine and norepinephrine disturbance that can cause depression.

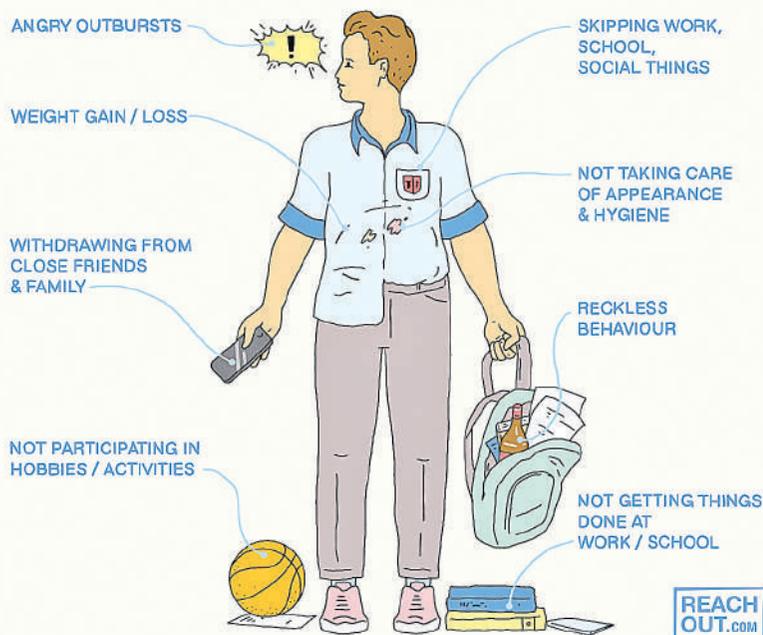
The medications that are usually prescribed to assist an individual recover directly or indirectly act on these brain hormones.

It is interesting to note that globally in low to medium income countries, between 76 per cent to 85 per cent of people with mental disorders do not receive treatment for their sicknesses.

In Fiji, like other developing countries, there is a lot of stigmas associated with mental illnesses which creates a big barrier for people with depression seeking help within their community or society, from hospitals or health facilities.

SIGNS & SYMPTOMS OF DEPRESSION

WHAT YOU SEE



Key Points:

- Depression is a common global disease. It is more common than we realise;
- It is manageable in our hospitals or health clinics and does not always necessarily need a referral to a psychiatric institution;
- Depression if not treated could lead to tremendous suffering and possibly suicide;
- A combined interaction of social, psychological and biological factors causes depression thus befall upon it by chance and not by choice;
- There is a lot of stigmas associated with mental illness which creates a barrier for the victims seeking help; and
- Depression is like any other medical disease and needs to be treated early to lessen the suffering.

ing help; and
○ Depression is like any other medical disease and needs to be treated early to lessen the suffering.

If you think you are suffering from depression or know someone who is suffering from it, please do seek help from your nearest health facility or Oceania Hospital Pte Ltd (OHPL) on (679) 3303404, short-code (Vodafone & Inkk) 5405/5405 or email info@ohpl.com.fj

■ Dr Ame Nasokia is a general practitioner at Oceania Hospitals Pte Ltd. The views expressed in this article are the author's and do not necessarily represent the views of this newspaper.

Above: Depression results from a complex interaction of social, psychological and biological factors. People who have gone through adverse life events (unemployment, bereavement, psychological trauma) are more likely to develop depression. Picture: JONA KONATACI

Depression, suicide, mental health ... words that most of us have a hard time comprehending, let alone discussing and seeking support for. In fact, studies show that approximately two out of three people who commit suicide suffer from major depression first. Picture: www.additudemag.com

Your Health
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