

Meaghan Coleman-Marcil

Ms. Dickie

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### Depression; a Silent and Misunderstood Illness

Many individuals have suffered of depression throughout the years. However it wasn't always as important as it is in today's society. Many cases of depression are discussed and solved each day with the help of prevention and intervention programs put in place for individuals of all ages. Citizens aged less than twenty-five and older than sixty-five are found to be the age groups which are most likely to be touched by depression. Depression and suicide touches an impressive number of the younger generations. In the past year, 28.5% of teenagers were touched by depression and 15.8% had thought about suicide as an option. (P. Monteso, C. Ferre, M. Lleixa, N. Albacar, C. Aguilera, A. Sanchez and M. Lejeune, 2012). Depression is more than a simple illness as the individual who suffers from depression is affected by its environment for example the workplace or educational building they frequently visit. Depression may also be linked to the individual's relatives (Keith A. King, Ph.D., MCHES, and Rebecca A. Vidourek, Ph.D., CHES, 2012).

#### **Risk Factors:**

##### Individual:

Factors that put an individual at risk of developing depression can be split into two different categories: personal issues and social issues. What is meant by personal issues is serious diseases

such as aids, diabetes , and chronic pains as it makes it difficult to do certain activities, lack of economic resources which leads anxiety issues as well with friction with other individuals which whom life is spent. (Jennifer Marie Camp. BSN RN, 2013) as for social issues, rejection and loneliness, the death of a spouse, losing employment or other stressful events can lead to depression. (P. Monteso, C. Ferre, M. Lleixa, N. Albacar, C. Aguilera, A. Sanchez and M. Lejeune, 2012). Postpartum depression also known as the baby blues is also caused by social issues as it is not only caused by the anxiety which the mother may face but the lack of support from significant other, or if there simply aren't a significant other. (Jennifer Marie Camp. BSN RN, 2013)

#### Social:

As discussed above, the lack of involvement of other individuals can lead to depression as someone who suffers from PPD for example will be affected by fatigue and medical problems which may arise from pregnancy as well as the lack of knowledge which a newborn brings to a family. By adding the lack of involvement from the family, anxiety is brought to the table and depression arises. (Jennifer Marie Camp. BSN RN, 2013). The loss of a loved one may also cause depression as it brings the feeling of loneliness. ( Kazier, ERB, Berman, Snyder, Bouchal, Hirst, Yiu, Stamler, Buck, 2010)

#### Environment:

The loss of employment or excessive work can cause a burnout or anxiety and may lead to short periods of depression. Other overwhelming situations such as death of a loved one can also cause depression.

**Protective Factors:**Individual:

Being educated when it comes to depression and it's symptoms when in school prevents\helps feeling secure on how to deal with such an illness. Learning about the symptoms and knowing where to find help is a crucial as it is the only way an individual will feel comfortable seeking for help. (Keith A. King, Ph.D., MCHES, and Rebecca A. Vidourek, Ph.D., CHES, 2012).

Social:

Research clearly indicates that family connectedness helps prevent suicide as the American foundation for suicide prevention estimates that three out of four individuals demonstrate their need for help to family or friends. Nine out of ten teenagers who think about suicide will display clues to others. This being the reason why students as well as adults must be aware of such warnings. (Keith A. King, Ph.D., MCHES, and Rebecca A. Vidourek, Ph.D., CHES, 2012).

Environment:

Feeling noticed by family members, school mates and peers and feeling socially accepted by others helps decrease the rates of depression among teenagers and young adults. Community connectedness, in other words having positive relationships with the individuals who live in a community will also help decrease the depression rate. Schools and workplaces must be informed on how to identify alerts and cries of help sent out by individuals in order to present them with special prevention programs, as well as how to cope with certain situations. (Keith A. King, Ph.D., MCHES, and Rebecca A. Vidourek, Ph.D., CHES, 2012).

**Consequences:**Individual:

The consequences of depression on the individual who has this illness vary between changes in personality and in the individual's physical appearance. The most common changes in personality are; experiencing sadness, feeling unhappy, crying often, demonstrating irritability, feeling ashamed, guilty, and worthless, feeling bored on a regular basis, losing interest in activities which we once interesting, having concentration and memory problems as well as expressing difficulty when making decisions and having thoughts of death or suicide. Some physical changes would be; feeling restless and agitated, having difficulty sleeping or oversleeping, feeling fatigued, experiencing sudden weight loss or weight gain. (P. Monteso, C. Ferre, M. Lleixa, N. Albacar, C. Aguilera, A. Sanchez and M. Lejeune, 2012, Kazier, ERB, Berman, Snyder, Bouchal, Hirst, Yiu, Stamler, Buck, 2010)

Society:

The lasting impact of depression and its symptoms affect the surroundings of the individuals such as family and peers as these symptoms do not go away immediately when the depression is treated. Some symptoms of depression were still present in some individuals even six months after being treated depending on the level of the depression. Symptoms such as poor academic results due to lack of focus, being on bad terms with family members due to feeling troubled, lack of communication with peers. ( Lisa H. Jaycox, Bradley D. Stein, Susan Paddock, Jeremy N. V. Miles, Anita Chandra, Lisa S. Meredith, Terri Tanielian, Scot Hickey and M. Audrey Burnam, 2009)

**Programs in Place:**Prevention and Intervention:

The prevention done in order to stop or slow down the process of depression is done in several ways. For the younger generations, it is thought in school. Schools are encouraged to adopt a understanding depression\ suicide prevention\ intervention program which incorporates three components. 1) Primary prevention programs; education skills building and protecting factor promotion. 2) Secondary prevention; early detection of depression using the warning signs analysis and using the proper interventions 3) Tertiary prevention; follow –up. There are also programs such as surviving the teen’s suicide prevention which helps recognize depression and suicide thoughts. For adults and the elderly some programs have been put into place such as Depression awareness program which serves the same function as the surviving the teen’s suicide prevention. For those who suffer of PPD there is therapy which is offered who is known as cognitive therapy to work with the mothers on what they believe are the behaviors which cause depression. (Keith A. King, Ph.D., MCHES, and Rebecca A. Vidourek, Ph.D., CHES, 2012, (Jennifer Marie Camp. BSN RN, 2013)

In conclusion, depression was not something individuals were used to talk about, however it has become a serious issue and many programs are put into place in order to offer help to those in need. Early diagnosis is the key, which is why many organisms have put out elements to help recognize the individuals who are in need of assistance. The fact that society is now opening to the idea of depression is simplifying the ways to cure it. Many individuals are now aware of the importance of talking care of their peers who suffer from depression. Individuals are coming to realise that depression is like any other illness and is not to be taken lightly.

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