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Overview of Depression

General Statistics

Depression is the most common mental health problem and largest cause of disability in the US and in the world; studies estimate that up to 16% of Americans in any year experience a major depressive episode.

Gender Differences on Depression and Suicide

Across western and non-western cultures, depression is twice as prevalent in women than men.

Women attempt suicide about 3 to 4 times as much as men but men complete suicide at a much higher rate.

80% of completed suicide are men and mostly white men, especially young men, ages 15 to 24, and men older than 65; widowed, divorced and single men are more at risk; men with substance issues are also more at risk.

Vets, Native Americans and LGBT communities are 2.5x more likely to attempt and complete suicide.

Rate of depression: White: 7.5%; African-American 4.9%; Hispanic 4.8%; Asian-American 4.1%

However, for men and women the course of illness for depression, severity, age of onset, duration and number of episodes are the same.

Measure of Traditional Masculinity

Mahalik, Locke, Ludlow, Diemer and Gottfried (2003)

One of the mostly widely used inventory on conformity to traditional (hegemonic) masculinity:

Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory

- 1 winning
- 2 emotional control
- 3 risk taking
- 4 violence
- 5 power over women/dominance
- 6 playboyism
- 7 self-reliance
- 8 primacy of work
- 9 disdain for homosexuality
- 10 status seeking

Atypical Male Depression Scale

Magovcevic, & Addis, M. E. (2008)

One of the widely used scales to assess atypical male depression: notice the difference from DSM definition:

The Masculine Depression Scale (MDS)

- 1 anger/aggression/irritability
- 2 substance abuse
- 3 social withdrawal
- 4 over focus on work/school
- 5 blunted affect
- 6 inability to express vulnerable feelings
- 7 loss of interest in succeeding
- 8 aches and pains
- 9 change in sexual desire
- 10 lowered stress tolerance
- 11 difficulties with decision making
- 12 need for autonomy/self reliance
- 13 worries about future
- 14 self critical/fear of failure
- 15 external blaming
- 16 burden/disillusionment

Gender Differences on Risk Factors and Triggers

Weissman (2014) summarizes the current results of one of the well known large scale, long term twin studies.

Risk Factors for Male Depression:

Childhood sexual abuse, conduct disorder drug abuse history of major depression and financial work and legal stress (note early dx of conduct disorder as youth so makes sense if you think of the male depression including externalizing behavior and anger).

Risk Factors for Female Depression:

Neuroticism (big factor theory), divorce, absent of maternal warmth social support and low marital satisfaction.

Association Between Traditional Masculinity and Mental Health

Men seek mental health services less than woman.

Traditional men are reluctant to seek out treatment and less comfortable with therapy.

Traditional masculinity correlates with fear of intimacy, lowered relationship satisfaction, negative belief about being a father, less involvement with children, and alexthymia.

Self-reliance, "playboyism, and sexism have strong negative correlations with mental health (especially interpersonal relationships).

Greater ability to rely on others, emotional expression and decrease in "playboyism" and sexism has strong correlations with positive mental health.

