Beyond the Blues - Depression

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Blues – Normal vs. Psychiatric Illness

- Baby Blues
- Bereavement
- “Good reasons” for being depressed
Lay Term Vs. Psychiatric Illness

- Synonym for sadness or demoralization
- “I’d be depressed too”
- Expected reaction to a stressor
- Or – a severe illness which requires medical treatment
Syndrome of Major Depression

- $1 + 4 = 5$
- #1 Depressed mood or loss of interest
- Depressed mood alone is insufficient for the diagnosis of major depression, also not necessary for the diagnosis.
- Depressed mood or loss of interest persists for at least two weeks all day every day
Plus 4 of remaining 8 symptoms

- 1. Depressed mood or lack of interest
- 2. Problems with sleep
- 3. Appetite change
- 4. Agitation or slowing
- 5. Fatigue or decreased energy
- 6. Worthlessness or guilt
- 7. Poor concentration
- 8. Thoughts of death or suicide
The Common Cold of Psychiatry

- Unlike the common cold risks include:
  - 1. Disability – which can be severe
  - 2. Death – from suicide or increased health risks
  - 3. Stigma of mental illness
  - 4. Loss of social support
  - 5. Broken relationships
Difficulty in Seeking Help

- Family and friends may advise against it
- Need for psychiatric help seen as a sign of weakness
- Self diagnosis is difficult
- Poor sleep, fatigue, aches and pains are mistaken for physical illness
Education Does Help

- Reduced stigma
- Depression screening instruments
- Articles about celebrities, CEOs
- Drug advertisements
How Common is Major Depression?

- 16.2% lifetime prevalence according to the National Comorbidity Survey Replication (9090 household residents ages 18 years or older – face to face survey conducted from February 2001 to December 2002)
- 6.6% 12 month prevalence
- Increasing prevalence among younger cohorts
- Female/Male = 1.7/1.0
Impairment Due to Depression

- 35.1 mean days out of role
- Less than 15 days out of role for most other chronic conditions
- Role = home, work, relationship, social
Undiagnosed and Undertreated

- Considerable overlap with diseases such as chronic fatigue, fibromyalgia
- Post stroke depression – 50 – 80%
- Frequent clinic visits among depressed patients
- 3.7% population treated vs 2.1% in previous study
- However this is a small proportion of depressed patients
- Treatment may not be adequate
Suicide

- Risk factors
  - 1. Male
  - 2. Unemployed
  - 3. Unmarried
  - 4. Alcohol or drug use
  - 5. Previous attempts
  - 6. Depression
Genetic vs. Environment

- Genetic predisposition – it does run in families
- Precipitating factors – losses, caregiver stress, physical illness
- Medical illnesses in which depression occurs
Unipolar vs. Bipolar

- Mania characterized by elevated or irritable mood, increased energy, grandiosity, decreased sleep, increase in risky activities, racing thoughts
Treatment

- Psychotherapy, especially cognitive behavioral therapy
- Medication
- Hospitalization