Research has shown:

- That lack of money, fear of failure of exams, family problems, and broken relationships were reported as causes of depression among medical students. Living off campus and poor self-perception were also associated with poorer mental health (Omokhodion & Gureje, 2003).

- Twenty four percent of first and second year medical students studied were found to be depressed by Beck Depression Inventory criteria. Of those depressed, only 22% were using mental health counseling services. The most frequently cited barriers to using services were lack of time, fears of lack of confidentiality, stigma associated with using mental health services, cost, fear of documentation on academic records, and fear of unwanted intervention (Givens & Tjia, 2002).

- In studying 304 first and second year medical students, the incidence of major depression during the first two years of medical school was 12%. Lifetime prevalence was 15% which is three times greater than the general population rate. An episode of depression prior to medical school was much more common among the depressed students as was a family history of treated depression (Zoccolillo, Murphy, & Wetzel, 1986).

IT’S OUT THERE!
About 5% of adults meet criteria for major depressive disorder at any given time (14 million adults in US). NOTE -This is likely an underestimate as many people with depression don’t seek professional help.

WHAT YOU MAY BE EXPERIENCING
For more than 2 weeks: sadness or loss of interest, plus 5 of the following : Guilt, low energy, concentration problems, appetite problems/wt change, psychomotor retardation, sleep change, hopelessness, and/or suicidal ideation.

WHAT TYPE OF DEPRESSION IS IT?
There are several types of depression (Major depressive disorder, dysthymia, manic depression, adjustment disorder with depressed mood, bereavement). Professional evaluation will help determine the type of depression you may be suffering.

DEPRESSION IS HIGHLY TREATABLE!!
Three psychotherapies for adult depression have strong empirical support and have been shown to effectively treat depression: Behavior therapy, Cognitive behavioral therapy, and Interpersonal psychotherapy. As such, seeking psychotherapy/counseling can be an important step in helping yourself recover from depression. Research has also shown pharmacotherapy (medication) to be effective in treating depression, especially severe and chronic types, so it may also be helpful to consider seeking a medication evaluation as part of your treatment of depression.

Here are ways you can start Overcoming Depression on your own:

- Work to increase your awareness of the cause(s) of your depression.
- Try to nurture a positive attitude about your self, your life, and your future.
- Beware of your negative thoughts and do not let your mind dwell on them.
• Focus on positive thoughts, accomplishments, and experiences.

• Minimize your isolation as this may make you feel worse. Get out and spend time with friends/family.

• Identify activities you enjoy and try to do them regularly.

• Exercise and practice relaxation regularly.

• Set goals that are realistic and obtainable.

• Try not to hold in anger – but talk with others about your upset in appropriately assertive ways.

• Identify your talents and strengths and nurture them.

• Definitely seek professional help if symptoms of depression persist.

Reference:


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