

Depression: On the rise worldwide

May is Mental Health Awareness month and as such an update on depression, a serious biologically based disease that is on the rise, is a timely topic. 33-35 Million American adults will experience depression at some point in their lifetime.

Several years ago experts predicted that by 2020 depression will be the 2nd largest disability group in the US. Now according to the World Health Organization (WHO), more than 300 million people worldwide (a number nearly the same as the entire US population) are currently living with depression an increase of almost 20% in the last ten years. These and other factors indicate depression is now the leading cause of disability in the world.

In the United States nearly half of those with depression are not being treated for a variety of reasons including shame and stigma, (being viewed as mentally ill) and a lack of access to services or awareness about the availability of help. The economic impact of depression worldwide may be a staggering one trillion dollars or more (WHO).

Major Depressive Disorders (MDD) can be diagnosed by medical professionals after at least two weeks of depressed mood and several of the following symptoms:

Persistent sadness, irritability, feelings of hopelessness,
difficulty sleeping, fatigue, weight changes, problems with concentration,
loss of interest in enjoyable activities, unwarranted feelings of worthlessness.

In a given year 15 to 19 million Americans over 18 years old are impacted by depression with women experiencing depression twice as frequently as men.

The recent rate of increase in depression among children is more than 23%. As referenced many do not seek help for depressive illnesses in part because of stigma. Despite a preponderance of medical evidence supporting the biological origins of depression, 54% of those polled still believe depression is a personal weakness.

Depression can be successfully treated with medication and/or psychotherapy
Be sure to see your healthcare professional should you experience listed symptoms and are feeling impacted at work, at home or in your social life.

For more information contact the National Alliance on Mental Illness at 516-224-4442
For help for you or a loved one call

LECSA EAP @ 631-851-1295