

# Depression

BY MARK FABER M.D.

# PREVALENCE

- 1 in 5 women and 1 in 7 men will experience depression in their lifetime
- Depression is among the most common reasons for disability at work and in school

# TYPES

- Adjustment Disorder with Depressed Mood
- Dysthymia
- Major Depression
- Bipolar Depression

# ADJUSTMENT DISORDER WITH DEPRESSED MOOD

- Symptoms
  - Specific stressor and a response to that stressor
  - Includes a period of depression that is short-term and then passes
  - Common experience for most people dealing with stressors in various settings
- Treatment
  - Supportive psychotherapy

# DYSTHYMIA

- Symptoms
  - Chronic, low-grade “blah” mood with diminished energy, interest, and concentration; may also have changes in appetite or sleep
  - Mood may vary but it would be unusual to have a period of stable mood for as long as 8 weeks
  - In children and adolescents, it lasts for 1 year (or more)
  - In adults, it lasts for 2 years (or more)
  - 40% of the time it may worsen to major depression
- Treatment
  - Cognitive behavioral therapy
  - Medication (e.g. SSRI's)

# MAJOR DEPRESSION

- SYMPTOMS
  - Symptoms include: prominently depressed mood for 2 weeks with changes in appetite, sleep, diminished energy and interest; also, feelings of helplessness, hopelessness, and thoughts of not wanting to live; associated impairment of functioning
- TREATMENT
  - Cognitive behavioral therapy
  - Medication (SSRI's, SNRI's, etc.)

# ADDITIONAL TREATMENT ISSUES

- The treatment of depression is generally very effective, but requires the right medication provided at the right dose provided at the right time
- It can take 2-6 weeks for medication to take effect
- Treatment in children and adolescents may begin with CBT although the combination with that and an SSRI may be more effective than either treatment option alone
- When treatment is not fully effective with a single medication, augmentation of that medication may be considered
- It is important to evaluate medical factors that may be related
- Baseline lab work including a CBC, SMA 7 and 12, T3T4TSH are important to rule out anemia and hypothyroidism; evaluating sleep is important as obstructive sleep apnea may manifest with daytime fatigue and depressive symptoms

# BIPOLAR DEPRESSION

- Symptoms
  - Type I: distinct periods of mania, alternating with periods of depression. In mania symptoms include racing thoughts, rapid speech, grandiosity, decreased need for sleep and hypersexuality
  - Type II: hypomania with periods of depression
- Treatment
  - Psychotherapy
  - Mood stabilizer medication (eg. Lamictal)