



The Silent Battle: Unveiling the Shadows of Depression

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Abstract

Depression, a pervasive mental health condition, often remains unnoticed and misunderstood within our communities. This commentary aims to bring attention to the significance of addressing depression and its far-reaching impact. It explores the detrimental effects of depression on individuals, families, and society as a whole, highlighting the hidden struggles faced by those living with this condition. Furthermore, it examines societal factors contributing to the rise of depression, such as modern lifestyles, social media, and the stigma surrounding mental health. The commentary emphasizes the importance of creating awareness, fostering open conversations, and promoting understanding to break down stigma. It addresses the limited access to mental health resources, advocating for affordable and accessible therapy and medication while calling for increased funding for mental health programs. The role of community support in combating depression is also highlighted, encouraging individuals to be empathetic and non-judgmental and suggesting the establishment of support groups and helplines. The commentary stresses the significance of self-care practices and healthy coping mechanisms and emphasizes the importance of seeking professional help. In conclusion, it summarizes the key points discussed and emphasizes the urgency of addressing depression collectively to create a compassionate and supportive society, offering a message of hope for recovery and healing.

Introduction

Depression characterized by persistent sadness and a loss of interest in daily activities, is one of the most significant mental health disorders that substantially burdens global health. The world health organization (WHO) estimates that 280 million people suffer from depression globally [1]. The illness tends to be episodic and the duration, number of episodes and pattern among patients is variable [2]. The impact of depression extends beyond an individual's emotional state, permeating all aspects of their life. The persistent low mood experienced by

those with depression often leads to a decline in motivation, energy, and engagement in day-to-day activities [1]. This lack of pleasure and interest is debilitating, resulting in social and occupational impairment. Relationships suffer, work productivity declines, and personal well-being becomes compromised, further exacerbating the cycle of depression.

While the causes of depression are complex and multifaceted, stressful life events have been identified as significant risk factors. Individuals who have experienced abuse, trauma, or significant loss are particularly vulnerable to developing depres-



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sion. The impact of these adverse experiences can disrupt the delicate balance of one's mental well-being, triggering depressive symptoms that may persist over a long period [2]. This commentary highlights the impacts, factors and role of the community in combating depression.

Societal drives of depression

It has been a major disaster when it comes to depression, resulting in a high number of suicide cases. The rise of depression can be accelerated by various societal factors, while keeping in mind that, depression is a complex condition with multiple causes; biological factors, psychological factors and societal factors in which all of these factors are interlinked and influence one another in a complex web of causation.

Social isolation, the influence of globalization, economic inequality, stigmatization and discrimination, education level, childhood or early life experiences, influence of modern lifestyles and gender-related factor can play part on causation of depression to many people.

Advancement in science and technology brought the increase of social isolation that led to loneliness and lack of social support in which at the end person develops depression. Also, low income and low education level led to depression in sense of a person not able to manage some difficult that will encounter and make him/her stressed, presence of digital media and social media due to the influence of globalization associated with cyberbullying and online harassment contribute to the rise of depression, also social media brings 'comparison culture' in which people compare themselves with others after showcasing their achievement, experience and possession on social media, this expose someone to feeling of adequacy, anxiety and stress. Not only that, also life experiences can lead to depression for instance childhood life whereby a child exposed to traumatic life events can exacerbate the condition, different literature shown that women are at high risk to develop depression that men because of unequal power, status, physical strength and personality traits [3].

Modern lifestyles have become increasingly fast-paced and demanding due to advancement in science and technology. Changes in lifestyle patterns such as poor diet, sedentary behavior, smoking, substance abuse and alcohol consumption are involved in the pathogenesis of major depressive disorder. Also, People are often expected to juggle multiple responsibilities such as work, family and personal pursuits, leading to inadequate sleep and increased stress levels [4].

Pressure to succeed has become more pronounced in many societies. Pursuit of success is often equated with financial wealth in which many people struggle on doing some activities so as to get money. It becomes worst when the expectation of becoming wealth is lowered due to fear of failure which result in high level of stress and depression.

Stigma refers to negatives attitudes, beliefs and stereotypes that are associated with mental health condition or is society's rejection of a person due to certain behaviors or physical appearances that are deemed unacceptable, dangerous or frightening. It creates an environment of fear of judgement, inadequacy, guilt, weakness, shame and discrimination, leading individuals to feel reluctant or embarrassed to seek support for their mental health concerns. Addressing the stigma surrounding mental health requires collectives' effort like create safe space for open dialogue about mental health, protest self and

public stigma, need of accurate information about psychotherapy, support and empathy, accessible and affordable services, empowerment and some evidence also suggests that people may be less self-stigma if their symptoms are normalized and given explanation for their problems are not their fault and are reversible [5].

Impact of depression

A close-cut overview the impact of depression on individuals, families, society, productivity, personal relationships, growth and hidden struggles accompany with depression. Depression is a complex mental health disorder that can have profound and far-reaching effects on individuals, families, and society as a whole. It not only hinders personal growth, relationships, and productivity but also leads to a range of hidden struggles for those living with the condition. Let's delve into the impact of depression across these different spheres [6].

Individual impact

Depression can have devastating impact on individuals. It affects their overall well-being. Leading to persistent feelings of sadness, hopelessness, and Worthlessness. Individuals with depression often experience a loss of interest in activities they once enjoyed, a decline in energy levels, disrupted sleep patterns, and changes in appetite. It can impair concentration, decision-making abilities, and memory, making it challenging to perform daily tasks effectively. Moreover, depression increases the risk of developing physical health problems such as chronic pain, heart disease, and substance abuse disorders [7].

Impact on relationships

Depression can strain personal relationships and hinder social connections. Individuals with depression may struggle to engage in meaningful interactions, leading to feelings of isolation and loneliness. The emotional toll of depression can make it difficult for them to express love, affection, or empathy, creating strained dynamics within families, friendships, and romantic relationships. The lack of understanding and support from loved ones can exacerbate feelings of guilt and self-blame in individuals with depression, further complicating their recovery [8].

Impact on productivity

Depression can significantly impact productivity, both in personal and professional spheres. Individuals may experience a decline in work performance, increased absenteeism, and difficulty meeting deadlines. The lack of motivation and energy caused by depression can hinder their ability to concentrate and make decisions, leading to reduced productivity. This not only affects the individual directly but can also have economics repercussions on organizations and society at large [9].

Hidden struggles

Living with depression often involves hidden struggles that are not immediately visible to others. Individuals with depression may face internal battles, such as constant self-doubt, intense self-criticism, and a distorted perception of reality. They may also wrestle with feelings of shame and stigma, which can prevent them from seeking help or discussing their condition openly. Moreover, depression can lead to suicidal ideation, further highlighting the gravity of the struggles faced by those living with this mental health disorder [7].

Recommendation

As far as the burden of depression is concerned, creating awareness about depression is of utmost importance. Education and understanding can dismantle the stigma, opening up channels for honest conversations about mental health. By fostering a culture of empathy and compassion, we can ensure that no one battles depression alone. Schools, workplaces, and communities must prioritize mental health discussions, equipping individuals with the knowledge and tools to support themselves and others.

However, awareness alone is not enough. Limited access to mental health resources remains a pressing concern. Affordable and accessible therapy, medication, and support systems are essential in providing comprehensive care. Increased funding for mental health programs and initiatives is crucial to ensure that mental health services are available to all who need them.

Building a supportive community is a powerful antidote to the shadows of depression. Let us strive to be empathetic, understanding, and non-judgmental. Establishing support groups and helplines can create safe spaces for individuals to share their struggles and find solace in knowing that they are not alone. Together, we can foster a sense of belonging and support, eradicating the isolation that often accompanies depression.

Encouraging self-care practices and healthy coping mechanisms is key to managing depression. Regular exercise, therapy, and creative outlets can serve as valuable tools in the journey towards healing. It is crucial to emphasize that seeking professional help when needed is a sign of strength, not weakness. With proper support and guidance, individuals can embark on a path of recovery and reclaim their lives from the clutches of depression.

Conclusion

It is imperative that we collectively address the shadows of depression. By raising awareness, advocating for accessible mental health resources, building supportive communities, and promoting self-care, we can create a compassionate and understanding society. Let us extend a helping hand, dispel the stigma, and offer hope to those battling depression. Together, we can make a difference and illuminate the path to recovery.

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