

Understanding Depression

Crippling: The "Worst" Disease

Pervasive: 15% in Lifetime

World-wide: #4 Cause of Disability

Bio-Chemical Factors

- Biochemical Illness
- Genetic Factors
- Takes Away Ability to Experience "Pleasure"
- Neurotransmitter Involvement
- Hormonal Involvement

Psychological Factors

- Influenced by Early Experiences Especially "Loss"
- There is no sense of "pulling yourself out of it"

"Spiritual" Factors

- Hopelessness
- Helplessness
- Worthlessness
- Distance from God and from Loved Ones

Aversion

- Brief Sadness
- Frustration

Reactive Depression

- Grief
- Loss

Major Depression

- Long Term
- Loss of Ability to Feel Pleasure

Leads to being more sensitive to being triggered again

Major Symptoms:

Activation of Stress Hormones, Over-Activation of Sympathetic Nervous System
Rhythmic Patterns to the Depression are common



Biology of Depression: Neuro-Transmitters

Nor-Epinephrine

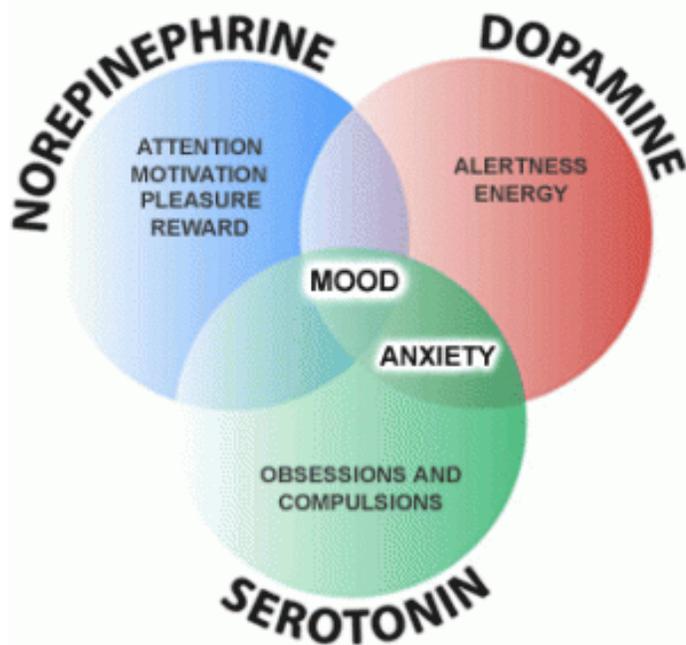
- Pleasure Pathways are Stimulated by NE
- Low NE > mostly causes Psycho-Motor Retardation

Dopamine

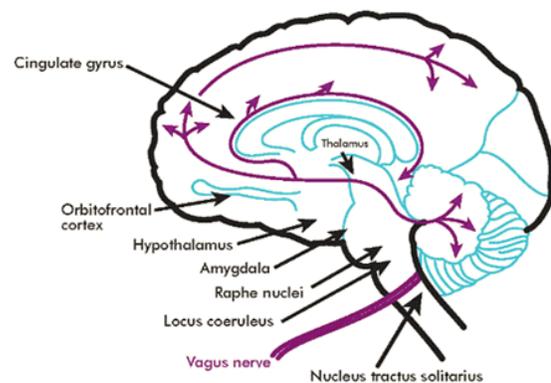
- Cocaine works on Dopamine Pathways
- Low Dopamine > Loss of Ability to Feel Pleasure

Serotonin

- Gives a sense of Well Being
- Low Serotonin > Excessive sense of Grief or Loss, Guilt or Shame, and Obsessions



Substance “P” neurotransmitter Transmits “pain” signals in the brain. If the levels of Substance “P” are reduced in the brain, symptoms of depression improve because the brain processes “psychic pain” in the same way as “physical pain.”



Neuro-Anatomy:

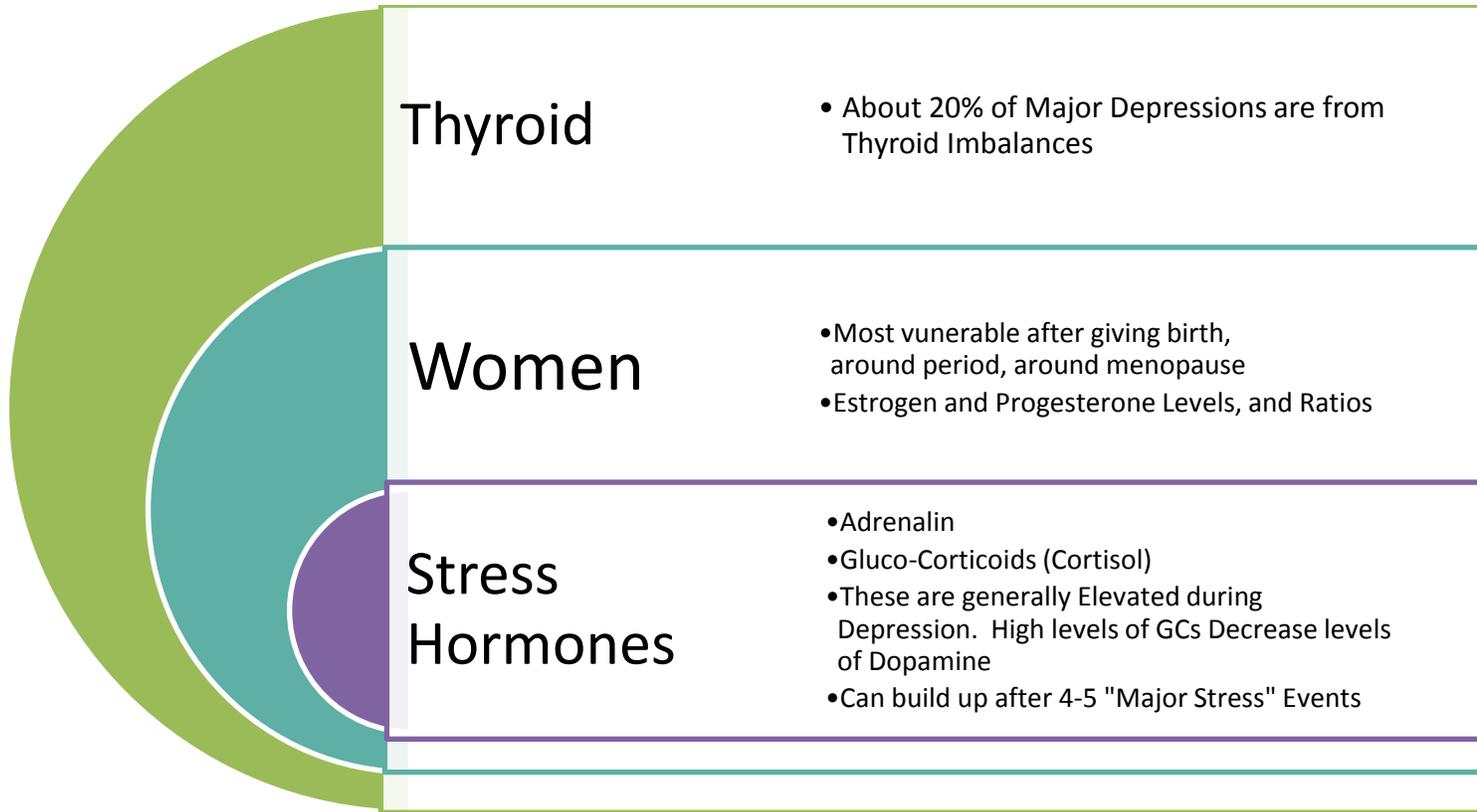
Reptilian – regulations of body functions

Limbic System – emotions, stress hormones

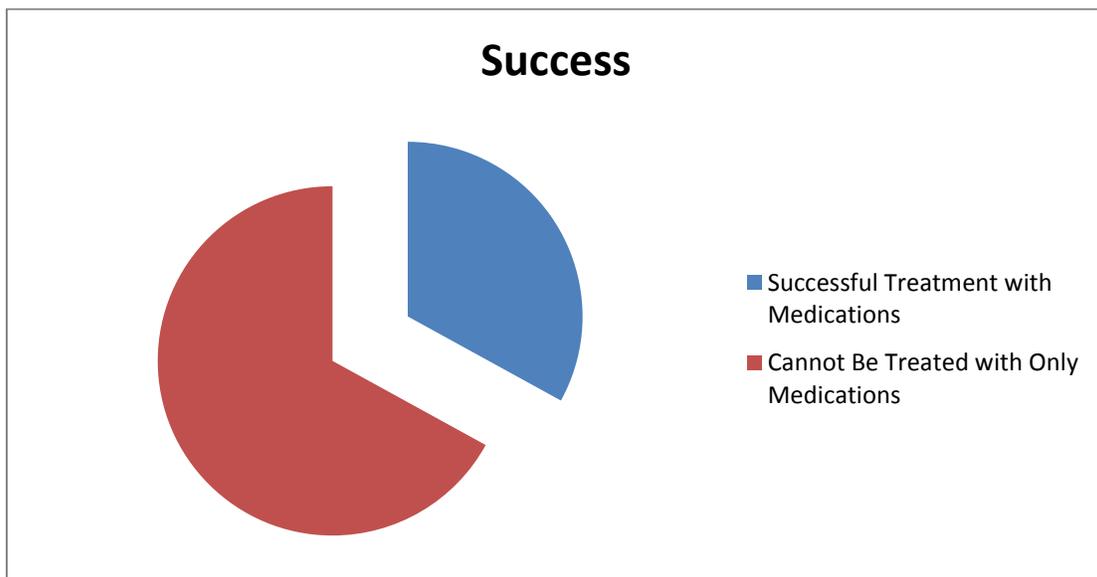
Cortex – complex processing of information

- doesn't make a difference between psychic pain and physical pain or danger
- drives the rest of the brain to act “as if...”

Hormones:



30% to 40% of Depressives can be treated successfully with just Medical-Biological Interventions. But 60% to 70% cannot. They will need Additional Interventions as well.



Emotional - Psychological Factors

Freud

- Mourning
- Melancholia
- Anger Turned Inward becomes Depression

Learned Helplessness

- Cannot Avoid or Escape Pain
- No Control
- Hopelessness, Helplessness

Stress From Loss or Grief

- Dumps Stress Hormones
- Intersection Between Mind and Body
- Loss of a Parent Prior to Age 10

What's the difference between "mourning" and "melancholia"?

- 📖 Mourning - Loss of a loved one > focus on the love;
- 📖 Melancholia - Loss of a loved one > focus on the loss;
- 📖 Aggression turned "in-ward" = depression

Learned Helplessness

- 📖 Cannot avoid the pain, so give up
- 📖 No control, helplessness, hopelessness

The stressors of loss (psychological stress) dump stress hormones.

- ✚ Stress is the intersection between psychological factors and biological factors.
- ✚ Loss of a parent to death prior to age 10 increases risks of major depression later in life.
- ✚ What about divorce? Abandonment?
- ✚ Loss of control, helplessness

Genetics: Depression Tends to Run in Families

Twin Studies : If one twin is depressed, the other twin has a 50% chance of becoming depressed (but 50% do not).

Siblings : if one is depressed, the others have a 25% chance

Half-siblings : if one is depressed, the others have an 8% chance

Genetics Are Important, But . . .

Genetics are important, but not more important than any other component.

Genetics are about vulnerability, not inevitability

The specific Gene related to depression: serotonin receptors and processing

Only a problem gene if there is a history of exposure to major stressors such as the death of parent, divorce, abandonment, disasters, trauma, abuse. This increases depression rates by 30%, but it is not deterministic (70% don't)

This gene is powered by stress hormones (gluco-corticoids)

Depression is a Real Biological Disorder

But people don't talk about it because it is seen as just a "mental disorder," or "moral flaw," or "lack of faith," or "lack of pulling yourself up by the boot-straps."

Helpful Things to Do

For Biological and Neurological Factors



Medications: "Day and Night"

Take the Time to Sleep

Relaxation to Lower Stress

Regarding Hormones Check Your Levels, Ratios



Thyroid Function

Estrogen, Progesterone

Testosterone in Males

EEG Neurofeedback is another intervention that can improve the "dys-regulation" of the brain and improve sleep and mood.

Cholesterol levels between 200 and 230 help hormone levels. Talk to Dr. Mensink.

Nutrition: From David Nelson, Ph.D. Nutritionist

- Parent Essential Oils – Essential Fatty Acids ("Yes" oils, or a broad spectrum variety)
 - Coconut, olive, sunflower, safflower, flax seed, primrose, borage, walnut, etc
- Phosphatidylcholine (a phospholipid)
- Butyric Acid – eat from ½ to 1 entire stick of butter every day
- If thyroid is a problem, use iodine supplement (Ioderal or Lugal's formula)
- Multi-Minerals
- Methyl B-12 and Methyl Folic Acid
- Deprex and Express by VAXA (nutrition2you.com)

Emotional Factors:

- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
- Supportive Counseling, Grief focused counseling
- Read aloud the 23rd Psalm x5 per day, prayer

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- DouglasCowan.ME

Depression : Things to Do This Week

Please visit your doctor to get a physical examination. We need to look at the following:

- Thyroid hormone levels. Are they low? Are they low for you?
Low thyroid hormone levels account for about 20% of major depressive episodes.
- Estrogen, Progesterone, and Testosterone hormone levels and ratios.
Are these levels ok? Many episodes of major depression in women are the result of these hormones being too low, or not in the right ratios to each other.
- Cholesterol levels. If they are too low, your body cannot make hormones as efficiently as it should. If they are too high, it is likely due to too much stress hormones in your system. A good target for right now is 200 to 230 until you feel better.
- To lower stress hormones right now, consider trying Exstress (an OTC).
Nutrition2You.com
- Also, ask your doctor if there is something that can help you get a good night's sleep for the next week. That's all. Just a few nights for now.

Please pick up a few things at the market and begin adding them into your diet:

- Oils – coconut, olive, sunflower, safflower, flax seed, borage, walnut, etc.
Add 2-3 spoonfuls per day into your meals.
- Butter – cook with butter. Try to use ½ cube of butter or more every day.
- Phosphatidyl-choline is a phospho-lipid. Available at health food stores.
- If your thyroid levels might be a problem, an iodine supplement might help. Look for “Ioderal” or “Lugal's formula.”
- Use a multi- mineral supplement daily (liquids are good).
- A methylated B-12 and methylated folic acid supplement may be helpful.

Finally...

Begin to make a list of people and events that have **hurt** and **wounded** you, and **losses** that you have suffered in life. Are there hurtful things that you think about a lot? Begin to make a **list** of each of them.

Are there **people** that need to **be forgiven** by you? Not that they deserve it, but it just may help to set you free from the hurt, and allow some of the wounds to heal. Make a list of these people, and **what they did** to you to hurt you. Perhaps a counselor or pastor could help you as you consider this.