

Depression: The Biggest Problem in the Present Generation

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Abstract: This paper presents a study on depression with a focus on present generation.

Keywords: Depression.

1. Introduction

A. Hypothesis

Depression, together with anxiety, is one of the most fundamental emotional states of conscious being. Mental pain is less dramatic than physical pain, but it is more common and also harder to bear. The frequent attempt to conceal mental pain increases the burden: it is easier to say "My tooth is aching" than to say "My heart is broken". In the present times the youth is under great pressure of work and falls prey to depression unknowingly.

"Depression is living in a body that fights to survive with a mind that tries to die."

B. Objective

This research paper delves into the historical and contemporary understanding of depression, exploring its roots in ancient civilizations, its portrayal in literature, and its impact on modern society. Additionally, the paper discusses the neurological basis of depression, various types of depression, and its prevalence in the present world. Furthermore, it presents the findings of a mental health survey conducted among youngsters and highlights the genetic factors associated with depression. The paper concludes by emphasizing the significance of awareness, support, and effective treatments for depression in addressing this pressing public health concern.

2. Ancient

Some of the first accounts of what we today call depression, and what was then called melancholia, come from Ancient Greece. For the ancient physician, melancholia constituted a depressive temperament brought on by an imbalance of the bodily "humors" or fluids. Hippocrates believed that the human body was composed of four substances: blood, yellow bile, black bile, and phlegm. Any sickness or disease in the body was the result of an excess amount of one of these fluids, and the doctor's job was to bring the humors back into balance by purging, bloodletting, and/or medications. Hippocrates and

other ancient Greek physicians posited that depressive melancholy was the result of an excess of cold black bile in the body (hot black bile caused mania or madness). To cure a patient of his illness, his black bile simply had to be reduced

Hippocrates did get something right: he concluded that mental illnesses, like severe melancholia, had something to do with the brain: "It is the brain which makes us mad or delirious, inspires us with dread and fear, whether by night or by day, brings sleeplessness, inopportune mistakes, aimless anxieties, absentmindedness, and acts that are contrary to habit. These things that we suffer all come from the brain when it is not healthy, but becomes abnormally hot, cold, moist, or dry."

Treatments used during the ancient times: Treatments of melancholia proliferated in Greece for the next 400 years, and many of them were used up through the Renaissance. Potions, prayer, philosophical reflection, walking, sleeping in hammocks, and drinking human breast milk were all remedies doctors prescribed for centuries to patients with depressive moods.

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3. Medieval Period

The Middle Ages carried on the classical idea of depression being rooted in one's disfavor with the gods. Medieval Europe, melancholy was a sign that one was living sinfully and in need of repentance. In fact, severe melancholy was sometimes seen as a sign of demonic possession. John Cassian recommended that melancholics withdraw from family and friends and perform hard manual labor in solitude as punishment for their sins. The Canterbury Tales, written in the 14th century, similarly describes the slothful person as one who is filled with despair, loss of hope, and "outrageous sorrow." Andrew Solomon, author of *The Noonday Demon*, suggests that this connection between melancholy and the sin of sloth may have given rise to much of the stigma that surrounds depression today.

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4. Cure for Depression

Cheyne prescribed a spartan vegetarian diet (though he himself had a hard time abiding by it as he loved to eat meat).

Other thinkers and scientists agreed with Cheyne's purchase among the aristocratic class, for whom luxury was both a source of enjoyment and some discomfort.

On the other hand, according to Burke, the best remedy for all these evils is exercise or labour.

5. Romanticism

The Romantics turned the tide once again in the first half of the 19th century, reviving the idea that dark moods were the soil for creative genius and perceptive wisdom. Contributions of Romanticists in dealing with Melancholy Poets like John Keats and Samuel Taylor Coleridge wrote odes to melancholy and dejection. Lord Byron called his dark moods "a fearful gift," and philosophers like Schopenhauer and Kierkegaard likewise took comfort, and even delight, in their despair and anxiety. Wrote the latter: "In my great melancholy, I loved life, for I loved my melancholy."

Understanding of Depression in India:

Now we have talked about what the people in Europe thought about the term Depression Now let's talk about What Indians know about depression We all might have read Mahabharata and Ramayana right? So here are a few people who actually showed signs of depression:

1. Shraavan Kumar (श्रवण कुमार) 's parents - When the only son of this blind old couple was killed by mistake by King Dasharatha, they went into extreme depression and anxiety and died then and there.
2. King Dasharatha - When lord Rama, Lakshmana, and Seeta left for 14 years of exile(वनवास), King Dasaratha was not even able to sit and talk. He was just lying on the bed and just chanting Rama's name occasionally and was never able to recover again and died in some time.
3. Ravana's brother Marrich - He was having symptoms of PTSD after he was grievously hurt by Lord Rama's arrow and was almost dead. This traumatic event threatened his physical integrity. He developed all the symptoms of PTSD, like hyper-arousal, re-experiencing the events, and avoidance. He also gave up his natural work of harassing the monk and got engaged in meditation and austerities. His symptoms lasted for many years till Lord Rama killed him, while he was masquerading as a golden deer to deceive Sita.
4. Arjuna - Though a mighty warrior, Arjuna is unwilling as he fears the annihilation of his kin and mentors. As a result of guilt, doubt, and attachment to his loved ones, Arjuna contemplates withdrawing from the battlefield. The Gita is a discourse by Lord Krishna, guiding his disciple Arjuna to the right course of action to help him fulfill his destiny in the war, a triumph of righteousness over evil. This interaction between Lord Krishna and Arjuna encompasses many psychotherapeutic principles.

5. The demon King Kansha - He developed GAD-like symptoms when Lord Krishna killed all his demons and threatened to kill him. He developed symptoms of GAD, like excessive worry about the attack from his arch-foe Krishna, difficulty in concentration, and difficulty in falling asleep. The symptoms of Kansha also lasted until Lord Krishna killed him.

Understanding of Depression (causes and its symptoms) in the modern world:

It's often said that depression results from a chemical imbalance, but that figure of speech doesn't capture how complex the disease is. You all might have read that studies have been going on this issue since the ancient times but still the reasearch on this term has'nt been over yet Popular lore has it that emotions reside in the heart. Science, though, tracks the seat of your emotions to the brain. Certain areas of the brain help regulate mood. Researchers believe that — more important than levels of specific brain chemicals — nerve cell connections, nerve cell growth, and the functioning of nerve circuits have a major impact on depression. Still, their understanding of the neurological underpinnings of mood is incomplete.

Types of depression:

The different types of Depression:

Major Depressive Disorder (MDD)

Persistent Depressive Disorder (PDD)

Bipolar Disorder Postpartum Depression (PPD)

Premenstrual Dysphoric Disorder (PMDD)

Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD)

Atypical Depression

The NSDUH study definition of major depressive episode is based mainly on the 5th edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5): A period of at least two weeks when a person experiences a depressed mood or loss of interest or pleasure in daily activities and had a majority of specified symptoms, such as problems with sleep, eating, energy, concentration, or self-worth. No exclusions were made for major depressive episode symptoms caused by medical illness, substance use disorders, or medication. And also this is the data courtesy of the SAMHSA Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

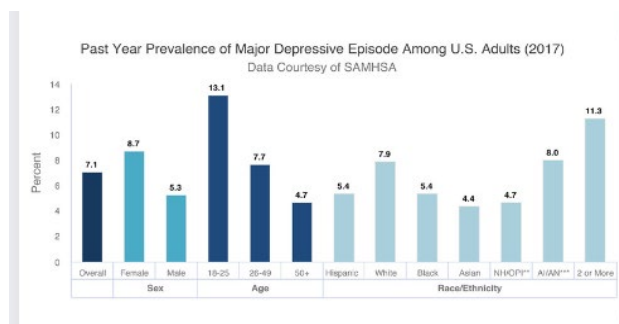


Fig. 1.

The above graph shows the past year prevalence of major depressive episode among U.S. adults aged 18 or older in 2017.

An estimated 17.3 million adults in the United States had at least one major depressive episode. This number represented 7.1% of all U.S. adults. The prevalence of major depressive episodes was higher among adult females (8.7%) compared to males (5.3%). The prevalence of adults with a major depressive episode was highest among individuals aged 18-25 (13.1%). The prevalence of major depressive episodes was highest among adults reporting two or more races (11.3%).

Mental health survey:

According to the mental health survey that we had conducted in which around 50 people had responded (participated) out of which around 68 % were females and 31 % were male. So, from this we came to know that in different age groups people show different kinds symptoms of depression. Common symptoms that we had observed among the youngsters were as follows : Under extreme mental stress Anxiety Lack of concentration during work or classes Feeling irritable due to insignificant reasons Hopelessly thinking about your future Had a disturbing experience (a TRAUMA) Family violence Corporal Punishment Death of a loved one Accident Health issues Family issues Feeling lonely even when surrounded with their family and friends Short-tempered Suffering from insomnia Change in the eating habits change in the routine exercise/yoga Feeling lethargic.

Scientificallly Depression is a common and serious medical illness that negatively affects how you feel, the way you think and how you act. most of the people unknowingly fall prey to it. Depression is not just about some kind of chemical imbalance in our brain instead its a lot more complex than that. To be sure, chemicals are involved in this process, but it is not a simple matter of one chemical being too low and another too high. Rather, many chemicals are involved, working both inside and outside nerve cells. There are millions, even billions, of chemical reactions that make up the dynamic system that is responsible for your mood, perceptions, and how you experience life. Researchers believe that — more important than levels of specific brain chemicals — nerve cell connections, nerve cell growth, and the functioning of nerve circuits have a major impact on depression. Still, their understanding of the neurological underpinnings of mood is incomplete.

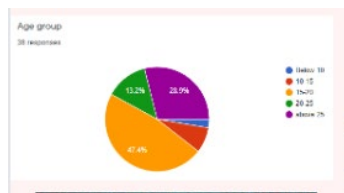


Fig. 2.

From the survey conducted we got several responses regarding what the youngsters are actually going through in their day-to-day life. Around 1/3rd of the people are or had been suffering from extreme mental stress and same percentage of people are not particularly sure if they had any kind of mental stress. Approximately 64% people said that they had been feeling anxiety, had felt change in their routine exercise,

similarly 55% of the people feel irritated for small reasons, are not able to concentrate in their work or classes and felt changes in their eating habits.

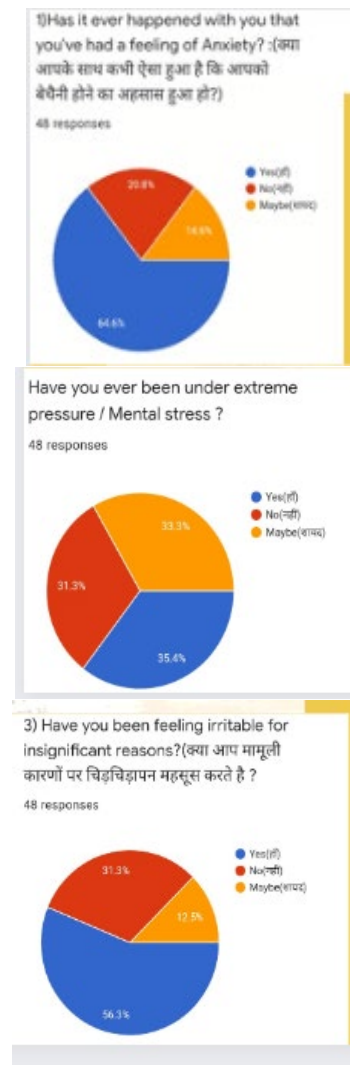


Fig. 3.

Around 45% people have felt hopeless once in their lives, and 41.7% people have had a disturbing experience.

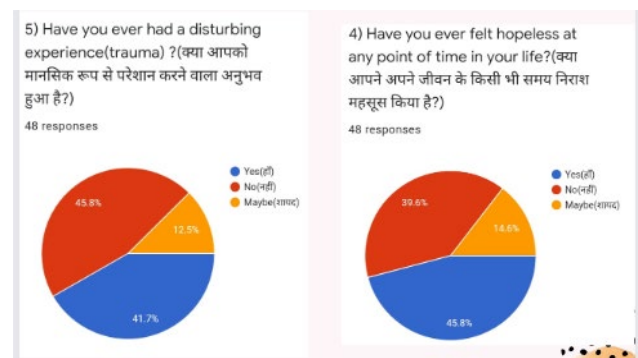


Fig. 4.

The above graph is based on the reasons due to which the youngsters have faced trauma that may have left a huge impact

on their brain round about 39% people have felt lonely even surrounded by friends and family, 35% people admitted that they have become too short tempered in the recent times. And approximately 71% people feel lethargic in their lives. and 55.3 % and 66.8 % have felt a change in their eating and sleeping habits but again there are many people who may not be having some symptoms but there are quite few of them who are really not knowing whether they are having these symptoms or not.

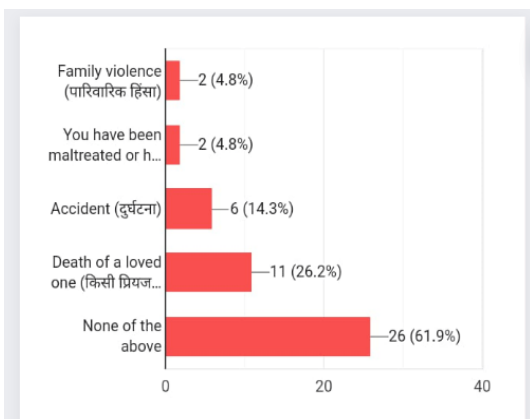


Fig. 5.

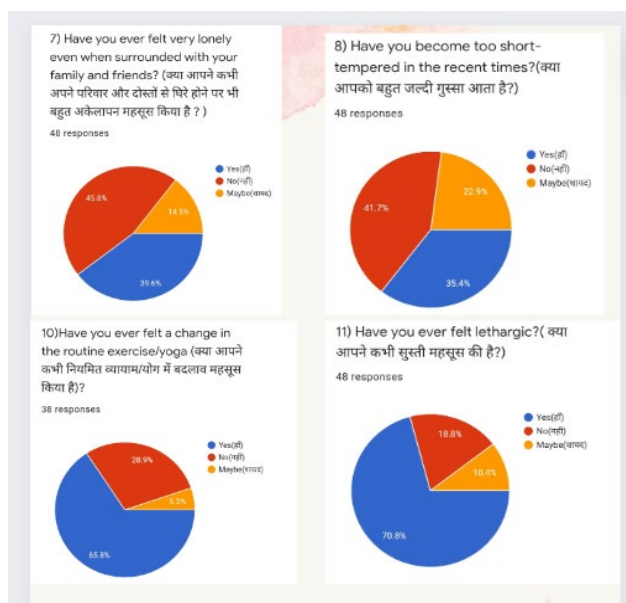


Fig. 6.

Genetic reason:

We all are well aware of the fact that there are several

diseases that are transmitted genetically like diabetes, thalassemia, Alzheimers', Cancer. But do you know that our genes are capable of transmitting various kinds of mental illness or depressions as well? The easiest way to grasp the power of genetics is to look at families. It is well known bipolar disorder run in families. Half of those with bipolar disorder have a relative with a similar pattern of mood fluctuations. Studies of identical twins, who share a genetic blueprint, show that if one twin has bipolar disorder, the other has a 60% to 80% chance of developing it, too. These numbers don't apply to fraternal twins, who — like other biological siblings — share only about half of their genes. If one fraternal twin has bipolar disorder, the other has a 20% chance of developing it. The evidence for other types of depression is more subtle, but it is real. A person who has a first-degree relative who suffered major depression has an increase in risk for the condition of 1.5% to 3% over normal. One important goal of genetics research is to learn the specific function of each gene. This kind of information will help us figure out how the interaction of biology and environment leads to depression in some people but not others.

It's Okay to Not Be Okay.

Are you feeling depressed?

The reasons for the same can be many some of the common reasons that we have found out through our survey were:

1. Covid situation including lockdown etc.
2. Studies
3. Work Pressure
4. Family issues
5. Trauma
6. Genetic reasons

And we as youngsters do understand them and are trying our level best to create awareness about this issue and to help those people who are affected adversely by this mental depression through our research as much as possible because we do understand the importance of this topic for our youth population who dream of reaching great heights but aren't able to do so because of this.

6. Conclusion

This paper presented a study on depression with a focus on present generation.

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