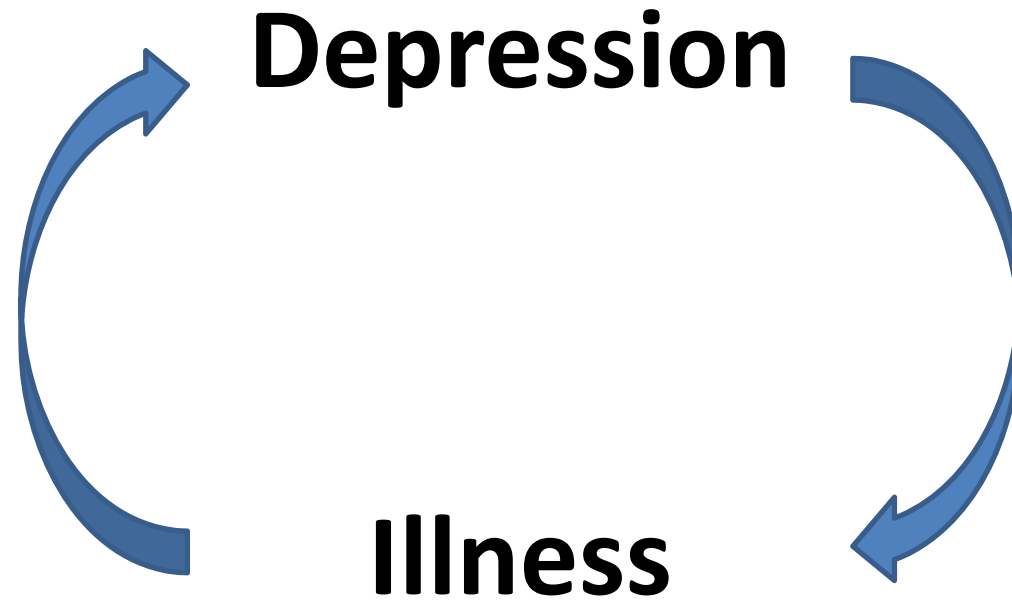


Depression and Illness

Jonathan Schaffir, MD
Dept. Of Obstetrics and Gynecology
Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio

Objectives

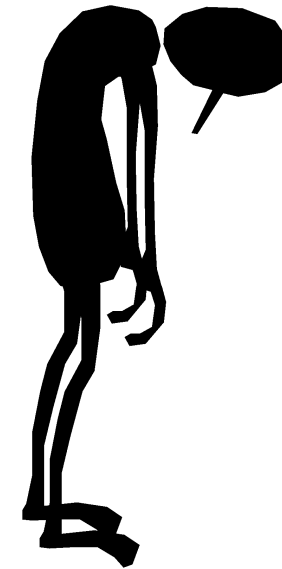
- Appreciate how depression and illness may interact
- Discuss how treatment of illness may impact mood, and vice versa



Depression and illness are highly interactive:
They have separate but additive effects to
adversely impact well-being

Depression is more common in women with chronic medical illness

- Overall, depression affects 25-33% of people with a chronic illness
 - Heart attack: 40-65%
 - Parkinson's disease: 40%
 - Multiple sclerosis: 40%
 - Cancer: 25%
 - Diabetes: 25%



Risk may be higher in those with a previous history of depression

Why does illness lead to depression?

- Creates stress
- Interferes with daily activities:
 - Impairs independence
 - Limits mobility
 - Interferes with social interaction
- Affects self-image/ self-confidence
- May cause despair/ lack of hope



Chronic illness may involve pain

- Pain is a separate but related factor leading to depression
- 30-54% of patients with chronic pain experience depression
- Those whose pain limits mobility and independence are most likely to be depressed



Symptoms of illness can overlap those of depression

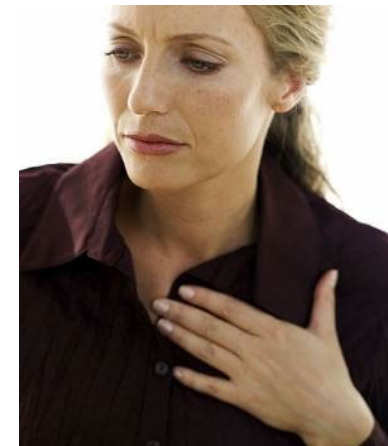
- Fatigue
- Sleep changes
- Appetite changes
- Loss of energy



These factors may impact the assessment and diagnosis of the underlying disease

Depression can affect the course of illness

- Depression increases the risk of various disorders:
 - Heart disease
 - Stroke
 - Irritable bowel syndrome
 - Parkinson's disease
 - Dementia



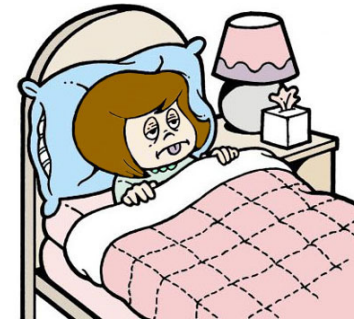
Could be associated with less attention to healthy behaviors or compliance with healthcare

How can depression influence the course of illness?

- Associated with decrease in certain markers of immune function
- Leads to delay in seeking medical care
- In setting of pain, may involve suppression of neurotransmitters (5-HT and NE) that also modulate sensation of pain

What does this have to do with obstetrics & gynecology?

- Women suffer from depression at twice the rate of men
- Depression may impact the course of:
 - Gynecologic cancers
 - Infertility treatments
 - Chronic pelvic pain
 - Fetal development and neonatal behavior



Treating illness

- May improve psychological well being:
 - Reduce pain
 - Improve outlook/ hope
 - Improve function and social interaction
 - Reinforces healthy behaviors



Treating depression

- Does not necessarily directly affect course of illness, but has beneficial effects on quality of life:
 - Decreased perceived disability and fatigue
 - Improves social and emotional functioning
 - Relieves psychological suffering
- In chronic pain patients, antidepressant treatment may reduce intensity and severity of pain

Conclusions

- Be sure to ask patients about their psychological well-being as part of any medical assessment
- Include management of depression symptoms in the treatment of medical disease
- Appreciate that mental health is an important measure of quality of life as your patient deals with medical illness



References

Goldberg D. The detection and treatment of depression in the physically ill. World Psychiatry 2010; 9: 16-20.

Meana M. The meeting of pain and depression: comorbidity in women. Canadian Journal of Psychiatry 1998; 43: 893-99.

Musselman DL, Nemeroff CB. Depression really does hurt your heart: stress, depression, and cardiovascular disease. Progress in Brain Research 2000; 122: 43-59.