



A CUP OF HEALTH WITH CDC

Defeating Depression

Current Depression Among Adults — United States, 2006–2008

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[Announcer] This podcast is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. CDC — safer, healthier people.

[Dr. Gaynes] Welcome to *A Cup of Health with CDC*, a weekly feature of the *MMWR*, the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. I'm your host, Dr. Robert Gaynes.

One of the most common health problems facing Americans today isn't caused by a bacteria or a virus. A recent CDC survey found that one in 10 people suffers from depression.

Dr. Lela McKnight-Eily is a clinical psychologist and researcher with CDC's National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. She's joining us today to discuss the common but treatable disorder known as depression. Welcome to the show, Lela.

[Dr. McKnight-Eily] Hi. Thanks for having me.

[Dr. Gaynes] Lela, what causes depression?

[Dr. McKnight-Eily] There're many causes of depression. Genetics, a family history of depression can increase your risk; substance abuse; illnesses, like cancer; physical, emotional, or sexual abuse; stressful major life events, such as getting a divorce or the loss of a loved one; or even good life events, such as getting a new job, getting married, or having a child.

[Dr. Gaynes] What are the symptoms of depression?

[Dr. McKnight-Eily] Symptoms of depression include weeks of feeling sad or irritable most every day, loss of interest or pleasure in activities, changes in weight gain or sleeping patterns, being keyed up or feeling slowed down, fatigue, feelings of worthlessness or guilt, lack of concentration, and recurrent thoughts of death or suicide.

[Dr. Gaynes] Is depression more common in any particular age, racial/ethnic group, or gender?

[Dr. McKnight-Eily] Sure. Depression occurs more frequently in women. We also found that older adults were less likely to report symptoms of current depression, although it is probably under-recognized and under-reported by this group. We also found that racial and ethnic minorities were found to have higher rates than whites, as were persons with less than a high school diploma, those previously married, unable to work or unemployed, and without a healthcare plan.

[Dr. Gaynes] What should a person do if they or someone they know have symptoms of depression?

[Dr. McKnight-Eily] They should get help from a health care provider. Individuals who have suicidal or homicidal thoughts or plans, along with feelings of hopelessness and worthlessness should be in contact with a doctor immediately, call 9-1-1, or go to a local hospital emergency room for help.

[Dr. Gaynes] Lela, what are the most common treatments for depression?

[Dr. McKnight-Eily] The good news is that for most people, depression can be effectively treated through the use of therapy and/or sometimes medication that impacts the areas of the brain affected by depression.

[Dr. Gaynes] Lela, where can listeners get more information about depression?

[Dr. McKnight-Eily] Listeners should go to [www.cdc.gov/mental health](http://www.cdc.gov/mental_health).

[Dr. Gaynes] Thanks, Lela. I've been talking today with CDC's Dr. Lela McKnight-Eily about the common but treatable mental disorder of depression.

Symptoms of depression include weeks of feeling sad, hopeless, worthless, or pessimistic. If you or someone you know has symptoms of depression, get help immediately from a health care provider.

Until next time, be well. This is Dr. Robert Gaynes for *A Cup of Health with CDC*.

[Announcer] For the most accurate health information, visit www.cdc.gov or call 1-800-CDC-INFO, 24/7.