

Major depressive disorder

Major depressive disorder (MDD) is mental abnormality that a patient has depression for at least two weeks in almost every situation. It usually coexists with lack of self-pride, loss of interest in normally enjoying activities, fatigue, and pain with unidentified causes. The patients may have delusion or hallucination. Some patients have depression for a moment after year while some always have the symptom. Major depressive disorder adversely affects the patients in various aspects including personal life, school life or work life as well as sleeping, eating habits and general health condition. 2-7% of adult patients having major depressive disorder are dead from suicide while 60% of the suicidal group has depression together with other emotional abnormalities.

The term “depression” can be used variously. It may refer to a group of this symptom or it may indicate other psychological abnormalities or just depressive condition. The major depressive disorder leads to disabling which brings about disadvantages to family, work, life, school, sleeping and eating habits, and overall health condition of individuals. In the United States of America, 3.4% of the patients having the major depressive disorder suicided and more than 60% of the suicidal people had depression combined with other emotional abnormalities. In Thailand, Major depressive disorder is the most common psychological abnormality (3.7% could access services), and it caused disability-adjusted life year (DALY) the highest ranking top ten of the world provided that it ranked number 1 among women and number 4 among men.

To diagnose the major depressive disorder requires experience, individual reports and mental health testing with no laboratory test for the major depressive disorder. However, a doctor may have it tested to separate from physical condition that causes similar symptoms. The major depressive disorder should be differentiated from grief which is normal in life but it is less severe. The depressive symptoms are denominated, described and categorized as mood disorder. In the manual for psychological abnormality diagnosis and statistic making year 1980 of the United States Preventive Services Taskforce (USPSTF) suggested that major depressive disorder screening should be performed with persons aged more than 12 years, but Cochrane Review stated earlier that there was no adequate evidence for disease screening.

General, the major depressive disorder can be treated with psychotherapy and anti-depressant. It seems that the medications are effective, but their action may be specific to those in severe cases of depression, but it is unclear whether the drugs affect suicidal risk or not. The apply psychotherapy includes cognitive behavioral therapy and interpersonal therapy. If other measures are not successful, the electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) may be exercised, and patients that are at risk of self-harm should be hospitalized despite being against personal will.

Understanding natures and causes of depression has been continuously developed even though it has not been complete. However, there remains a number of topics to be further examined. The proposed causes are mental, psychosocial, genetic, and evolutionary issues and other physical factors. Abusing drugs for long time may worsen the depression. Psychotherapy relies on theories related to personality, and interpersonal communication and learning. Biological theories are focused on neurotransmitters in monoamine type such as serotonin, norepinephrine and dopamine which naturally exist in brain and contribute to communication between neurons.