

Depression Report

Student Name: Zobia Ashfaq (2524669)

Module Code: LCHS4008

Module Title: Introduction to Public Health

Title: Report on Depression

Lecturer Name: Debra Odeh

Introduction

Depression is a common mental health condition that affects how a person feels, thinks and behaves. It is more than just feeling sad for a few days. People with depression often feel unhappy for weeks or months and may lose interest in activities they usually enjoy. Depression can affect anyone, regardless of their age, gender or background. Common signs and symptoms include feeling sad most of the time, low energy, poor sleep, changes in appetite, difficulty concentrating, feeling hopeless and, in some cases, thoughts of self-harm or suicide (NHS, 2023). According to the World Health Organisation (WHO, 2023), around 280 million people worldwide are living with depression. In the UK, about one in six adults experience moderate to severe symptoms of depression (ONS, 2023). Because depression affects so many people, it is important to measure, monitor and control the condition to improve people's health and well-being.

Measuring Depression

Measuring depression helps doctors and mental health professionals understand how serious a person's condition is. It also helps them decide what treatment is needed.

One of the most common ways to measure depression is by using the Patient Health Questionnaire-9 (PHQ-9). This questionnaire asks nine simple questions about how a person has been feeling during the last two weeks. The answers are given a score, which shows whether the depression is mild, moderate or severe (NICE, 2022).

Another tool that is sometimes used is the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI). This questionnaire asks questions about emotions, thoughts and physical symptoms. It helps healthcare professionals understand how depression is affecting a person's daily life.

Doctors also measure depression by talking to patients during appointments. They ask about symptoms, family history, work, relationships and any stressful events that may have caused the depression. They also ask if the person has had thoughts of harming themselves because this helps identify people who need urgent support.

Sometimes doctors carry out physical health checks or blood tests. This is because some illnesses, such as thyroid problems or vitamin deficiencies, can cause symptoms similar to depression.

At a national level, depression is measured through surveys carried out by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). These surveys help the government understand how many people have depression and which groups are most affected. This information helps the NHS plan mental health services.

Monitoring Depression

Monitoring depression means checking how a person is feeling over time. Depression can improve or become worse, so regular monitoring helps make sure the treatment is working.

After someone is diagnosed with depression, they usually have regular appointments with their GP or mental health worker. During these appointments, the healthcare professional asks if symptoms have improved or become worse. They may ask the patient to complete another PHQ-9 questionnaire to compare the results with previous scores.

People who are taking antidepressant medicine also need regular check-ups. The doctor checks if the medicine is helping and whether there are any side effects. If necessary, the medicine can be changed or the dose adjusted.

People receiving talking therapy, such as Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), are monitored during each session. The therapist asks about the person's mood, thoughts and daily activities. They also help the person learn new ways of coping with stress and negative thinking.

Some people use mobile phone apps or mood diaries to monitor their feelings. These tools help people notice changes in their mood and identify things that make their depression better or worse. Although these apps are useful, they do not replace advice from a healthcare professional.

The NHS also monitors depression by collecting information about waiting times at a hospital, recovery rates and the number of people using mental health services. This information helps improve services across the UK.

How to Control the Depression

Depression can be controlled with the right treatment and support. The earlier it is treated, the better the chances of recovery.

One of the best ways to control depression is through talking therapies. Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) is one of the most common treatments. It helps people understand negative thoughts and replace them with more positive ways of thinking (NICE, 2022).

Doctors may also prescribe antidepressant medicines, especially for people with moderate or severe depression. These medicines help improve mood by balancing chemicals in the brain. It may take several weeks before the medicine starts to work, so patients need regular support from their doctor.

Healthy lifestyle choices can also help control depression. Regular exercise has been shown to improve mood because it releases chemicals in the brain that make people feel happier. Eating a healthy diet, getting enough sleep and avoiding too much alcohol or drugs can also improve mental health.

Support from family and friends is very important. Having someone to talk to can reduce feelings of loneliness and encourage people to continue with their treatment.

Community awareness campaigns also help control depression by teaching people about the signs and symptoms. These campaigns encourage people to ask for help early and reduce the stigma around mental illness. Schools, colleges and workplaces can also support people by promoting mental health and offering counselling services.

Consequences of Depression on the Individual and the Community

Depression can have a big effect on a person's life. People with depression often feel sad, tired and hopeless. They may stop enjoying activities they used to like and find it difficult to concentrate at school or work. Some people may struggle to get out of bed or look after themselves. If depression is not treated, it can become worse and may lead to self-harm or suicide (WHO, 2023).

Depression can also affect physical health. People may eat too much or too little, have trouble sleeping and become less active. This can increase the risk of other health problems such as obesity, heart disease and diabetes.

Families and friends are also affected. It can be difficult to see someone they care about struggling with depression. Family members may feel worried, stressed or unsure how to help. Relationships can become difficult because the person with depression may withdraw from others or avoid social activities.

Depression also affects the community. Many people with depression need time off work or school, which can reduce productivity and affect the economy. Employers may lose staff because of sickness, and businesses may have higher costs. The NHS also spends a lot of money providing treatment and support for people with depression. This means more pressure on doctors, nurses and mental health services.

Depression can also lead to social isolation. Some people stop seeing friends or taking part in community activities, which can make their symptoms worse. This is why early support is so important.

Health and Social Care Services for People with Depression

There are many health and social care services in the UK that help people with depression.

Most people first visit their GP (General Practitioner). The GP listens to the person's symptoms, carries out an assessment and decides what treatment is needed. They may recommend talking therapy, prescribe antidepressant medicine or refer the person to a mental health specialist (NHS, 2023).

The NHS Talking Therapies service offers free treatment for depression and anxiety. People can receive Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), counselling or guided self-help. These treatments help people understand their feelings and learn ways to manage their depression.

For people with more serious depression, Community Mental Health Teams (CMHTs) provide extra support. These teams include psychiatrists, psychologists, mental health nurses, social workers and occupational therapists. They work together to create a care plan that meets the person's needs.

Mental health nurses support people by checking their progress, giving advice about medication and encouraging healthy lifestyle choices. Psychologists provide talking therapies, while psychiatrists can prescribe specialist medicines if needed.

Social workers help people who need support with housing, benefits, employment or family problems. They also help protect vulnerable adults if they are at risk.

There are also charities that provide support. Mind offers information, support groups and advice for people living with depression. Samaritans provide a free helpline for anyone feeling distressed or having suicidal thoughts. These organisations give people someone to talk to when they need help.

Family and friends are also an important source of support. Encouraging someone to talk about their feelings, attend appointments and continue treatment can make a big

difference to their recovery. It is better to reach out to friends and family to discuss strategies that reduce depression, instead of dealing with it by yourself.

Conclusion

Depression is a common mental health condition that affects millions of people around the world. It can have a serious impact on a person's emotions, physical health, relationships and daily life. Measuring depression using tools such as the PHQ-9 helps healthcare professionals understand how severe the condition is. Regular monitoring through GP appointments, talking therapies and mental health services helps make sure treatment is working. depression can be controlled through a combination of medication, talking therapies, healthy lifestyle choices and support from family, friends and healthcare professionals. Early diagnosis and treatment can improve recovery and reduce the risk of serious complications such as self-harm or suicide. Health and social care services, including GPs, NHS Talking Therapies, Community Mental Health Teams and charities, all play an important role in supporting people with depression. With the right care and support, many people with depression can recover and live healthy, fulfilling lives.

References

1: Mind (2024) Depression. (19 July 2026).

2: National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) (2022) Depression in adults: treatment and management (NG222). (Accessed: 19 July 2026).

3: NHS (2023) Clinical Depression
<https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/conditions/clinical-depression/overview/> (19 July 2026).

4: <https://www.ons.gov.uk> (Accessed: 19 July 2026).

5: World Health Organisation (WHO) (2023) Depression
<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/depression> (19 July 2026).

6: Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) (2024) Mental Health. (19 July 2026).