

Depression in Later Life

Depression in the aging is a medical problem that frequently goes unnoticed and undiagnosed primarily because the depressed mood symptoms may be less noticeable than the sufferer's other symptoms. In addition, symptoms of depression like the loss of appetite, sleeplessness, low energy, reduced enjoyment in activities may be mistaken for normal aspects of aging. Depression in later life frequently coexists with medical illnesses and other chronic disabilities that may affect the recognition of the symptoms of depression.

Mortality rates by suicide and other causes are higher among the elderly with depression when compared to nondepressed elderly people. Some studies even suggest that depression may increase the risk of death in the elderly population if the depression goes undiagnosed and untreated.

Depression in the elderly is best treated with a combination of psychotherapy and medications. Prevention of relapse is a crucial issue in those seniors treated for depression.