

Only one-third of those with depression seek treatment

By ACSH Staff — December 16, 2014



According to the CDC's National Center for Health Statistics

(NCHS) [Data Brief](#) ^[1], almost 8 percent of Americans aged 12 and older reported moderate to severe depressive symptoms in 2009 to 2012, but only one-third of those people sought treatment from a mental health professional.

About 3 percent of all Americans were found to have severe depressive symptoms. Females had higher rates of depression than males in every age group, and the highest rate of depression was found in women aged 40-59, at over 12 percent. People living below the poverty level were almost 2.5 times more likely to have depression than those above the poverty level. Almost half of those with mild depressive symptoms and almost 90 percent of those with severe depressive symptoms reported difficulty with work, home, or social activities related to their symptoms.

Studies have shown that the most effective treatment for depression is a combination of antidepressants and therapy. An unfortunate misconception about depression is that it's a weakness, moral failure or a mental state that someone chooses to adopt, and that it can be cured if someone simply snaps out of it. This is not the case. People with depression often have biological differences, including out of balance neurotransmitters and hormone changes that lead to the disease. Certain genes may also be involved, as depression can often run in families. (Of course, there is situational depression, brought on by the loss of a loved one including divorce or treasured employment position, but these episodes tend to wane over time but still need treatment for that period).

While the shocking suicide of the seemingly ever-exuberant [Robin Williams](#) ^[2] this past August helped to begin the widespread public discussion about the seriousness of mental illness, a damaging stigma still exists. However, no one should be embarrassed to seek treatment for any clinical disease with such profound potential outcomes, and good treatment options depression included.

Source URL: <https://www.acsh.org/news/2014/12/16/one-third-depression-seek-treatment>

Links

[1] <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db172.htm>

[2] <http://acsh.org/2014/08/robin-williams-tragic-waste-life-important-educational-opportunity-depression/>