

# Social class may impact treatment for depression

October 28 2010

---

(PhysOrg.com) -- Current treatments for depression don't help working-class and poor patients as much as they help middle-class patients improve their ability to function at work, according to a recent University of Illinois at Chicago study.

Depression has a profound impact on an individual's productivity. That's particularly true among individuals in lower social classes and with lower levels of education, such as many of those in sales and support jobs, says Lydia Falconnier, assistant professor in UIC's Jane Addams College of Social Work.

Falconnier reviewed data from the National Institute of Mental Health Treatment of [Depression](#) Collaborative Research Program from 1982 to 1986. Participants included 239 patients with [major depressive disorder](#).

The study found that following treatment for depression, working class and poor patients' ability to function at work improved less than middle-class patients.

The same results were found for patients taking medication for depression or receiving one of two different kinds of psychotherapy: interpersonal psychotherapy or cognitive-behavioral therapy.

The study also has implications for the ability of current depression treatments to help depressed working-class and poor mothers to improve the care they provide for their children.

"This is particularly important since a lot of research shows negative outcomes for children of depressed mothers," said Falconnier, the study's principal investigator.

"This also raises questions about mandated depression treatment for working-class and poor mothers who are involved in the child welfare system."

Future research will be needed to discover what needs to change in [depression treatment](#) so that working class and poor patients can benefit from it as much as middle-class patients, Falconnier said.

"One route to improved outcomes might be to adapt current therapies to include a greater focus on the daily work and economic stressors that low-income individuals face," she said.

The study findings were published in a recent issue of the journal *Psychiatric Services*.

Provided by University of Illinois at Chicago

Citation: Social class may impact treatment for depression (2010, October 28) retrieved 27 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2010-10-social-class-impact-treatment-depression.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
--