

Study to investigate what we think about depression

May 15 2015, by David Stacey

Australians are being encouraged to take part in a new study at The University of Western Australia investigating community opinions about depression.

Chief Investigator Neil McLean, a [clinical psychologist](#) and lecturer in UWA's School of Psychology, described [depression](#) as the 'common cold' of [mental health problems](#).

"Depression affects many people – not only those who suffer from it, but people around them, such as their friends, family and workmates," Mr McLean said. Long-term depression is also a significant risk factor for suicide. More than seven Australians take their own lives each day.

"Despite awareness campaigns increasing the public's knowledge about depression, many sufferers still feel uncomfortable about getting help," Mr McLean said.

"And we know that people who don't seek help are less likely to recover, and are at a greater risk of being depressed long term. We need to better understand the barriers that stop people seeking help so that we can shape programs to meet the needs of those who are depressed."

Mr McLean said it was important for researchers to understand community beliefs about depression. "There is not much point having effective programs if for one reason or another people are reluctant to enlist this professional support," he said.

Participants in the study will be asked to fill out a short online questionnaire and will be asked about topics such as what they think causes depression and how it should be treated. All adult Australians are eligible to participate and those who have personally experienced depression are strongly encouraged to take part.

Those who take part also have a chance to win a \$100 prize.

Anyone interested in taking part should visit the [online study](#) investigating the community's attitudes towards depression.

Provided by University of Western Australia

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