

Living with a depressed loved one can take mental, financial toll

January 2 2024, by Ernie Mundell



Reduced income, unemployment and mental health issues are more common among people who live with a loved one diagnosed with depression, new research shows.

"These findings indicate that the impact of [depressive symptoms](#) may extend beyond the affected individuals, imposing a burden on other adults in their households," study lead author Paul Greenberg, of the Analysis Group, an economics consulting firm in Boston, said in a news release from the American Psychiatric Association.

Reporting Dec. 27 in the [Journal of Affective Disorders](#), Greenberg and his colleagues tracked the financial health and [quality of life](#) of nearly 17,000 U.S. adults. All completed a standard questionnaire with items on income, employment, health and other issues.

About 1,700 of the participants lived with someone battling depression.

The study showed that folks living with a depressed person had, on average, \$4,720 less in total annual income, than people who didn't. That's an 11.3% average drop in income, Greenberg's team calculated.

Folks living with a person who was depressed also missed more workdays and were more likely to be unemployed.

Their quality of life appeared to suffer, as well: Living with a depressed person was linked to lower scores on tests aimed at assessing mental and [physical health](#), the study found.

All of this, "further supports the value of adequate treatment to address depressive symptoms for adults and reduce the spillover effect to others in their households," Greenberg said.

More information: Paul Greenberg et al, Impact of living with an adult with depressive symptoms among households in the United States, *Journal of Affective Disorders* (2023). [DOI: 10.1016/j.jad.2023.12.040](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jad.2023.12.040)

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Citation: Living with a depressed loved one can take mental, financial toll (2024, January 2)
retrieved 21 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2024-01-depressed-mental-financial-toll.html>

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