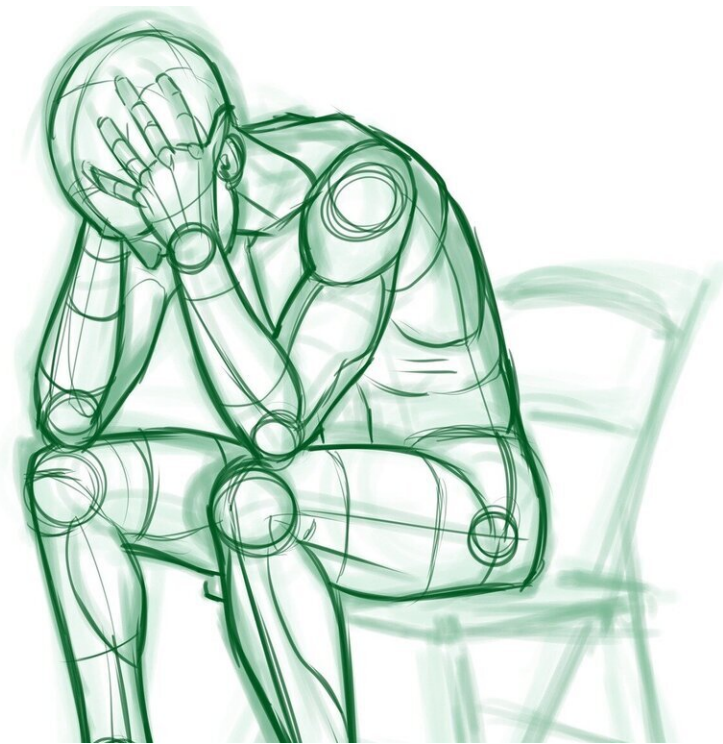


Certain personality traits possibly linked to increased risk of depression

April 10 2024, by Bob Yirka



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A small team of psychiatrists and psychologists from The Nathan S. Kline Institute for Psychiatric Research, the University of Cambridge, the Albert Einstein College of Medicine and the University of Virginia has found that certain personality traits may put people at a higher risk of developing depression.

In their study [published](#) in *Journal of Affective Disorders*, the group analyzed data from nearly 1,500 questionnaires returned by people aged 6 to 85.

Depression is a mood disorder that affects millions of people around the world. Prior research has shown that the degree of symptoms can vary between individuals and during different stages of life. Medical researchers have been working for many years to provide relief from depression, including learning more about the factors that lead to the disorder.

In this new study, the research team wondered if certain personality traits might be associated with the likelihood of developing the disorder. To find out, they created a questionnaire that could help classify personality traits; questions asked whether respondents had ever suffered from depression and if so, when and to what degree.

The researchers received 1,494 completed questionnaires from people of nearly all ages, many of whom had experienced bouts of depression and some of whom had chronic depression. The researchers used a variety of techniques to find patterns in the data, one of which involved a machine-learning application.

They found that people with certain personality traits, such as introversion or neuroticism, were more likely to experience bouts of depression. They also found that the associated personality traits changed over the course of a person's life. And they found that such associations were strongest during adolescence, which, they note, makes sense logically—the [prefrontal cortex](#), which has been linked to many [personality traits](#), is not fully developed until adulthood.

More information: Zhen Yang et al, Personality traits as predictors of depression across the lifespan, *Journal of Affective Disorders* (2024).

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