

Depression common in U.S., women hit hardest

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(HealthDay)—Nearly one in 10 U.S. adults has depression, and the rate is almost twice as high for women as men, health officials say.

National survey data showed that more than 8 percent of adults aged 20 and older suffer from low mood, according to a new report from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Among women, slightly more than 10 percent have [depression](#), versus 5.5 percent of men. And the mood disorder affects everyday life for a majority of these people, the 2013-2016 questionnaires show.

"One of the findings that surprised us the most was that for both men and women, about 80 percent of adults with depression had at least some difficulty with functioning with daily life," said lead author Debra Brody.

These include going to work, completing daily activities at home and getting along with other people, said Brody, of the CDC's National Center

for Health Statistics (NCHS).

"This report should make people aware how serious depression is, and that it impacts [everyday life](#)," she added.

According to the report, depression is most prevalent among blacks (9 percent) and least so among Asians (3 percent). Among whites and Hispanics, the rate is about 8 percent.

Also, as income levels fall, depression rises. Poor Americans are four times more likely to have depression than middle class or rich people—about 16 percent versus 4 percent, respectively.

According to Dr. David Roane, chairman of psychiatry at Lenox Hill Hospital in New York City, "The biggest issues with depression are diagnosis and treatment."

In most cases, primary care doctors are able to diagnose depression, he noted. "But people often don't get adequate treatment in terms of both medication and psychotherapy," Roane said.

He stressed that anyone with depression should be monitored by a doctor or [mental health](#) professional, such as a social worker, nurse or therapist.

Effective treatment includes antidepressant medications and talk therapy, Roane explained.

However, there are obstacles to treatment, he said. For one thing, people often don't realize they are depressed, even if they have mood problems and changes in thinking.

Also, [mental health problems](#) are still often considered taboo. "The stigma related to depression has decreased somewhat, but it's still a major issue for someone to be diagnosed with a mental health disorder," he said. In addition, many

cases of [mild depression](#) will resolve over time, so some patients don't want treatment.

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"The problem is that if you are having [functional impairment](#), it can be highly disruptive to your life," he said. "Six months is a long time to suffer from depression, and I don't recommend that."

Anyone with [recurrent depression](#), suicidal thoughts or manic and depressive swings should be under the care of a mental [health](#) professional, Roane advised.

He said that depression affects all aspects of life, affecting people emotionally and physically.

When people are depressed, they don't sleep or eat well. They are sad and have a negative view of [life](#) and feelings of hopelessness, he explained.

The researchers reported that the percentage of American adults who suffered from depression in a given two-week period remained steady from 2007 to 2016.

The study authors also pointed out that [major depression](#) is associated with high societal costs and greater functional impairment than other chronic diseases, such as diabetes and arthritis.

It has been shown before that women are more prone to depression than men, but the reasons are not known, Roane said.

Data for the report were gathered from the U.S. National Health and Nutrition Examination Surveys. The findings were published online Feb. 13 in the CDC's *NCHS Data Brief*.

More information: Debra Brody, M.P.H., division of Health and Nutrition Examination Surveys, National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS), U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; David Roane, M.D., chairman, psychiatry, Lenox Hill Hospital, New York City; Feb. 13, 2018, U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's *NCHS Data Brief*, online.

For more about depression, visit the [U.S. National Institute of Mental Health](#).

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