

# **DEPRESSION: Prevalence, Signs & Symptoms**

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**A presentation by DeKUT @KUPCA Conference Nov 2023**



## Why this topics?

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**Suicide** has been mentioned as leading **cause** of **death among** university **students**.

2/3 of those who die by suicide had depression at time of the act

(WHO, 2022)

- ❖ Link between MDD & youth suicidal behavior worldwide
- ❖ Common cause of disability: 2<sup>nd</sup> leading cause of disability –worldwide
- ❖ knowing the signs of depression, taking steps to guide students toward the help they need, and by being a source of support and encouragement.

# Depression:

## Definition

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**Mood disorder that causes a persistent feeling of sadness and loss of interest/also called major depressive disorder /clinical depression**

- ✓ Affects one's feelings, thoughts, and behavior.
- ✓ It can lead to a variety of emotional and physical problems.
- ✓ One could have trouble doing normal day-to-day activities, and sometimes one could feel as if life isn't worth living.
- ✓ More than just a bout of the blues, depression isn't a weakness and you can't simply "snap out" of it.





# Prevalence

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## Globally

- Depression is very common and affects nearly 2 million young people.
- Documented as one of the leading causes of disability worldwide (WHO, 2022)
- Projected to significantly contribute to the overall global burden of disease by 2030
- Research on MDD amongst college students has gained elevated attention in recent years
- College yrs considered a critical transition period for students as they become adults faced with diverse challenges



# Prevalence (Contd)

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- Students at this stage of life are susceptible to various mental disorders
- Presence of severe MDD symptoms hinders college students from participating in academic activities, could also result in -ve consequences, some fatal
- Gender: more women than men
- Higher among People with lower incomes

## Prevalence Kenya

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- *“MDD has today become a common phenomenon and it affects persons from all walks of life and ages...”* HE President Uhuru Kenyatta in his Madaraka Day speech in June 2019
- *“The rising number of mental health related cases in the country, such as MDD, and other mental illnesses, some of which ended up in suicide cases, have been a concern to the Government,”* Mutahi Kagwe, CS
- MDD and anxiety disorders are the leading mental illnesses diagnosed in Kenya
- Kenya is ranked 4th in Africa having an estimated 1.9 million people with MDD



## Prevalence -DeKUT

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- A total of 29 clients (staff and students) seen between May 2021 and May 2022 fell within the criteria of presenting AT-risk behavior/tendencies, particularly suicidal ideation.
- The majority of the clients assessed reported depressive symptomatology on a self-assessment scale necessitating the need for medical management.



# Depression : Sign & Symptoms

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- 5 or more of the following symptoms for at least 2 weeks and representing a change from previous functioning (must include depression or anhedonia)
  - Depressed mood
  - Anhedonia
  - Significant change in weight or appetite
  - Insomnia or hypersomnia
  - Psychomotor agitation or retardation



# Depression : Sign & Symptoms

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- Fatigue or loss of energy
- Feelings of worthlessness or excessive or inappropriate guilt
- Diminished ability to think or concentrate
- Recurrent thoughts of death, suicidal ideation without a specific plan, or a suicide attempt or a specific plan for committing suicide

Must cause clinical significant distress or impairment. Need to rule out substance or medical condition as cause. Not better explained by another psychiatric disorder.



# Determinants of depression amongst University Students

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## Diverse risk factors:

- Increased responsibilities
- Conflicts , family , friends
- Higher study yr / campus life
- low SES
- Poor academic performance- multiple academic related stressors e.g, Exams
- Poor life satisfaction
- Physical inactivity /lack of proper self-care
- Recent death, abuse , neglect
- Pressure to get a good job after program completion

## Causes of MDD

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Depressive symptoms can be rooted in many different causes.

- ❖ Depression can sometimes be a response to a crisis or when life just happens.
- ❖ It is normal for young adults to feel down or moody sometimes. But if those feelings last for weeks, it could mean something more serious is going on and you may need to seek help.



# Assessment tools for MDD

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- PHQ9
- Beck Depression Inventory (BDI)

# Tx of MDD

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- Depression may require long-term treatment
- Most people with depression feel better with medication, psychotherapy or both
- **Psychotherapy models**
  - CBT
  - interpersonal therapy (IPT)
  - behavioral therapy
  - cognitive therapy
  - psychodynamic therapy
  - supportive therapy



# TX, Psychotherapy

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- Average effects of therapy are larger than that produced by many medical treatments.
- Therapy teaches life skills that last beyond the course of treatment. The results last longer than medications.
- Therapy rarely produces harmful side effects.

# Treatment contd

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## Other Tx Options

- Peer Support Groups
- Physical exercise
- Meditation
- Self-help books / online info
- Mobile apps
- ECT (Electroconvulsive Therapy)



For your students  
\_empowerment is the  
key

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This makes a good  
recipe for  
improved  
emotional health

- Have them connect with their families and school fraternity
- Teach them ways to enhance self-esteem (Life skills at University).
- Work towards academic achievement.
- Help them develop positive relationships with peers at school and other places.
- Teach them to open up & appreciate asking for help when needed.
- Help them find opportunities to be responsible for others (volunteering at roles, care for others etc).
- Taking time each day to do something positive for themselves.

# MDD & Meaning ?

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- When people feel depressed, they often withdraw from meaningful activities
- A powerful intervention is to reconnect to a source of meaning and engage in activities that are meaningful, such as:
  - Relationships
  - Work or volunteering
  - Education or training (growth)
  - Citizenship or community life