

Q & A Mindline



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Q I have suffered from depression on and off for a number of years, but I fear going to a psychiatrist as usual treatments involve multiple tablets, which makes me very tired and ill. Is there any other way to treat my depression?

Well, it depends on what triggers the episodes, how severe the degree of depression is and its associated impact on your functioning and life in general. Perhaps there is underlying medical condition like thyroid problems, which can trigger depressive episode. This is best evaluated by a psychiatrist who must conduct an evaluation of your problem and offer treatment options which can include advice on lifestyle change, fitness programs, talk therapy and medication where appropriate.

For example, those suffering from a mild degree of depression will respond very well to supportive talk therapy and working through their triggers. Regular exercise for about 30 to 45 minutes per day for about 4-5 days per week can also help. It may take many weeks or months to overcome the depression but



it is indeed possible to recover without medicine.

If the depression is of significant nature and reoccurring then I suggest you consider a combination of specialised talk therapy as well as an application of long-term low dose antidepressant medicines which are effective, safe and non-addictive. Adding exercise and yoga therapy in the midst can also expedite recovery and contribute to your overall wellbeing.

Overall, it is unwise to suffer and risk deterioration of mood when it can be more effectively treated with a combination of the above mentioned methods. More importantly, significant episodes of depression are associated with negativity, hopelessness and in many cases self-harm or suicidal ideation, which can have obvious life-threatening effects on your life.

Q Do you think one must read up on their mental health problems before consultation in order to ask detailed questions and get better understanding of diagnosis and treatment offered?

I see a lot of people who start 'Googling' about any and all health issues. As a consequence, they end up acquiring incorrect or inappropriate information which triggers and exacerbates health anxiety more than necessary. It can then set off a sense of urgency and undue panic for the individual and his/her family. Unsurprisingly, this can adversely affect the quality of consultation. Many would demand unnecessary expensive investigations (like CT scan) which can lead to added health hazards.

I think it's better to see an expert first and obtain a clear understanding of the problem in question, followed by reading a leaflet or perhaps accessing links to professional websites or e-resources. This will enable one to get appropriate and relevant information in order to make informed decisions about diagnosis and treatment plan. This will also help in seeking additional opinion to doubly ensure that the diagnosis that is being offered is in the parameters of national and international norms and guidelines.

Undoubtedly, 'knowledge is power' but it's important to have the right knowledge. There is a lot of good quality information available on mental health issues on the internet. But you will need guidance in understanding where to get the said information. If your expert isn't guiding you to it then find another one!

*Ask your queries at
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