

PHYSICIAN FACT SHEET ON DEPRESSION AS A RISK FACTOR FOR DEMENTIA

1. Depression is a common disorder in mid and later life.
2. Depression occurs more often in patients with neurodegenerative diseases including Alzheimer's disease, stroke, Parkinson's disease and others.
3. Depression may worsen health outcomes in older persons, including cardiovascular disease, cerebrovascular disease, and diabetes.
4. Persons with adult-onset depression demonstrate increased risks for late life dementia.
5. Persons with dementia or mild cognitive impairment have significantly increased risk for depression.
6. Rodent models for depression suggest that stress may reduce the reparative and regenerative capacity of neurons.
7. Treatment for depression in all age groups is simple, safe, and cost-effective.
8. Most antidepressant medications are effective for treating mid or later life depression.
9. Physicians should avoid alarming patients with a past history of depression by focusing on the beneficial effect of antidepressant therapy.
10. Insufficient data is available to advise patients that treating mid or late life depression reduces their risk of developing dementia.