

FACT SHEET ON DEPRESSION IN THE ELDERLY

- Depression is a biological brain disorder.
- Depression is not a normal part of aging.
- Depression is treatable.
- Seven to 12 percent of all people over the age of 65 become depressed.
- Suicide is one of the leading causes of death in the elderly.
- Thirty to 40 percent of all seriously medically ill elderly individuals suffer from depression.
- Most depressed patients cannot make themselves well.
- Seventy to 90 percent of depressed elderly patients will improve with medication and other therapy.
- Most elderly depressed patients can be treated as an outpatient.
- Many medications, such as antihypertensives, cause depression.
- Some depressed elderly individuals need three or four types of therapy before they improve.