

Depression and Lupus

When to Ask For Help

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Depression

- Depression is a term often used in our everyday vocabulary.
- However, having the blues or a momentary sadness is not the same as a clinical depression.
- How do we begin to know the difference, especially when we experience so many of these symptoms as a result of having SLE?

Depression is a Disease: Not a Choice

- Depression in and of itself is a serious, usually chronic disease.
- The biology of depression is controversial.
 - Some research indicates that there is an imbalance in the production and re-uptake of serotonin and/or norepinephrine and/or dopamine (Sapolsky, 1998).

Medications assist in managing depression like other diseases.

Depression and Infection?

- Some researchers have linked infection to the change in the brain.
- Individuals treated for a severe infection are 62% more likely to experience depression (Skerrett, 2013).
- Individuals with an autoimmune disorder are 45%-69% more likely to experience depression depending on the study.

What Is Depression?

- Experiencing some of the following symptoms most of the day, nearly every day, for at least two weeks.
 - Persistent sad, anxious or “empty” mood.
 - Feelings of hopelessness.
 - Irritability.
 - Feelings of guilt, worthlessness or helplessness.
 - Loss of interest or pleasure in hobbies and activities.
 - Decreased energy or fatigue.
 - Difficulty concentrating, remembering or making decisions.

Depression Continued

- Difficulty going to sleep or staying asleep.
- Sleeping too much.
- Appetite or weight changes.
- Thoughts of death or suicide.
- Aches or pains, headaches, cramps, or digestive problems with a clear physical cause.

(National Institute of Mental Health)

WOW DON'T ALL OF THESE SOUND FAMILIAR TO THOSE OF US WITH AN AUTOIMMUNE DISORDER???

DEPRESSION AS AN AUTOIMMUNE DISORDER?

- Many studies have begun to demonstrate a relationship between mental health, physical health and social structures and supports (Friedman, 2011).
- Some research indicates that as a result of autoimmune diseases, the body releases inflammation substances called cytokines that change how brain cells communicate (Skerrett, 2013).

When Should I Get Help?

- If you have Lupus then you feel some of the symptoms of depression. It can feel a great deal like an autoimmune disorder.
- So When Do I Get Help?
 - When feelings of sadness, helplessness, hopelessness, and despair have lasted for two weeks.
 - Are the symptoms impacting your work or family life?
 - When all of your physical symptoms are increasing.
 - When you no longer enjoy anything.
 - If you have suicidal thoughts or self harm thoughts.
 - When you stop taking care of yourself.

Why Treat Depression?

When treated for Depression:

- Both Lupus and Depression symptoms feel more manageable to the individual.
- Individuals report less pain. Individuals in pain are depressed and individuals who are depressed are in pain. Both are linked to sleep issues and fatigue.
- Depression is significantly related to fatigue.
- Pain, fatigue and depression impair quality of life, relationships, and doctor-patient relationships (Arias et al., 2011).

Treatment

- Counseling is a valuable aid to assist in finding meaning and focus in this new life of “being sick”.
- Anti-depressants.
- Social Support.
- Finding quality of life.