

European Brain Council (EBC) Joint Statement: WHO World Health Day on Depression

European Depression Challenge: Reduce the rate of untreated depression to less than 10% by 2030

« Some days, 24 hours is too much to stay put in, so I take the day hour by hour, moment by moment. I break the task, the challenge, the fear into small, bite-size pieces. I can handle a piece of fear, depression, anger, pain, sadness, loneliness, illness. I actually put my hands up to my face, one next to each eye, like blinders on a horse.» - Regina Brett, patient

"I was so worried about Mom... she stopped eating, stopped looking after herself...blamed herself for everything ...could not see she was ill. So pleased she got the right treatment... Now we have our Mom back!" - Anon, carer

Depression is a common mental disorder that is treatable, often preventable, and may be fatal if left unmanaged.

Key facts:

- Depression is, globally, the single largest cause of ill health and disability, accounting for 7.5% of all time lived with disability in 2015⁽¹⁾
- More than 40 million people in Europe suffer from clinical depression today – one in every 25 people. At a global level the figure is over 322 million people⁽¹⁾
- People with a physical illness are 3-6 times more likely to also have depression⁽²⁾, leading to longer periods of illness, worse outcomes and higher economic costs
- Depression is a leading contributor to the almost 1 million deaths by suicide worldwide every year⁽¹⁾
- Around 750 billion euro in economic output is lost annually worldwide due to depression⁽³⁾
- Treatment of depression leads to a return of 4 euro for every 1 euro invested⁽⁴⁾
- Worldwide, 50% of people with depression receive no treatment and as few as 10% receive effective treatment⁽⁴⁾
- Up to 350 million working days are lost due to depression and poor mental health every year in Europe⁽⁵⁾

A wide and growing range of effective treatments is available for depression, including psychological therapies, pharmacological treatments, and physical therapies such as transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS), electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) and direct current (tDCS) stimulation. eMental Health has opened new possibilities for accessing treatment.

Patient and advocacy organizations play a key role in supporting people with depression, as they can provide health education about the symptoms, their likely cause and the available options for self-management and treatment (termed psycho-education).

Cutting edge new research, including research supported by European Brain Council member organizations, is essential to achieve further insights into the mechanisms and causes of depression - as a primary mental disorder, as part of the symptoms of numerous neurological disorders or as a comorbidity of other physical illnesses - and innovative approaches to its treatment and delivery.

The European Brain Council and its member organisations are working together to:

- improve the scientific understanding and treatment of depression
- better prevent and detect depression
- enhance support for those living with or touched by depression
- strengthen public awareness of the nature, impact, costs and treatments for depression

The European Brain Council, together with its member organizations, therefore today, April 7th 2017, launches the Depression Challenge and calls on all European people and governments to pledge their commitment and significant resources towards meeting the challenge:

Reduce the rate of untreated depression to less than 10% by 2030

Sources:

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