

Free research paper on reasons for higher rate of depression among minority youth...

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Abstract

Depression is a major concern of the modern day medical and health sector. Various national entities have thus employed varying methodology in the aim of mitigating and reversing its negative effects. Policymaking is therefore more focused on the depression-enhancing case scenarios, with various measures being formulated and implemented towards tackling the same. Additionally has been the need of enhancing the treatment measures, methodology and procedures requisite towards greater treatment of depression. Notably, has been the need for a paradigm shift, with regard to viewing depression as not only an ailment or symptom of other biological ill functions, but also as a social construct. This has been established through various research studies that have provided a link between the prevailing social organization/ conditions and the rate of depression of the populace present. It is this paper's aim to thereby delve in the reason why depression is much more prevalent in a given social segment - the poor and minority (marginalized) populations, and especially so amongst the youthful section. Also included will be the different measures taken towards managing and treating the illness.

Reasons for Higher Rate of Depression among Minority Youth

Introduction

Depression is a global concern, especially within the greater medical arena, because of its effects on the greater social fabric. As a highly debilitating illness, its non-treatment often results in people having very poor quality of life, be it socially, physically and mentally. Loneliness is a feeling, which is <https://assignbuster.com/free-research-paper-on-reasons-for-higher-rate-of-depression-among-minority-youth/>

often experienced, in addition to various accompanying symptoms. As an illness, it affects millions globally, thereby necessitating various governments to work hand in hand with other concerned stakeholders. This essentially regards the existing medical fraternity, health ministries, agencies and institutions, with the aim of mitigating and eventually reversing the effects of depression. As noted earlier, this ailment is but a social construct, which is minimally linked to genetic composition. Rather, it is fundamentally rooted in the prevailing social contexts around an individual or group of people, where varying experiences gradually catalyze mental ailments.

Depression: A Medical Analysis

Depression is linked to the psychology of an individual, and is medically categorized under mood disorders. These are a group of ailments, as categorized under the DSM IV TR – Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders – classification system (American Psychiatric Association, 1994). They are deemed to originate and subsequently form part of the underlying feature, when a person's mood is disturbed. Mood disorders regard the longitudinal emotional state of an affected individual, with affective disorder referring to external expression of an affected individual, as observed by others. Affected individuals often do experience extreme periods of despair or sadness, which may last for two weeks and more. There is a tendency of feeling helpless, in addition to hopelessness by affected individuals, where unfortunately, self-blame is present.

This psychological aspect is most vital concerning diagnosis and treatment of individuals suffering from depression. When one experiences depression,

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there is a general interference with his/her daily socialization and activities i. e. eating, sleeping, task performance, concentration and work. Inadvertently, the social life is affected, as other associated symptoms such as headaches and stomach upsets set in. anger is unfortunately, a resultant symptom of depression, with restlessness being experienced over long durations of time. In other cases, individuals suffering from depression may become exhausted, in addition to being overwhelmed. This essentially leads to their less engagement in socialization and daily routines, eventually affecting their social and family lives.

Depression as a Social Construct

As earlier aforementioned, depression as an ailment, is fundamentally rooted in the psychological balance of an individual, as influenced by prevailing contexts. This however, does not exclude the influential contribution of genetic, biological, chemical and environmental factors (American Psychiatric Association, 2010). These, when combined with social and psychological factors, contribute to the rising cases of depressed populations globally. As an increasingly occurring condition, depression often signals the presence of imbalance, with regard to specific emotional, physical and mental aspects of affected individuals. It is due to this array of contributing factors, which makes the diagnosis of depression difficult. This is because causes of depression are often not immediately certifiable. This therefore requires treatment that is careful evaluation, followed by adequate diagnosis, by a professional mental healthcare practitioner.

It is often in situational contexts, where the affected individuals have little or no control, where depression cases largely occur. Major life stressors, as well

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as significant transitions do have the effect of catalyzing depression.

Additionally is the presence of subtler factors, which often result in the affected individuals' loss of self-esteem and identity, thereby contributing to the general depression levels experienced. It is understandably the psychological nature of depression, which is associated with prevailing social contexts. Minority groups and populations often face a wide-ranging array of issues, which making their lives harder and less bearable, ultimately affect their psychological balance.

Stress is more prevalent amongst this group of individuals, due to the nature of prevailing conditions i. e. poverty levels, less social structuring, increased social segmentation, lack of adequate living conditions and poor working environments (Wilhelm, 2006). In addition is the existing statistics of human rights and freedoms, with negative effects being greater amongst minority groupings. Racism, racial discrimination, gender bias and sexual orientation intolerance are some of the major contributive social constructs responsible for such an increase of depression cases. Both the social basis and psychological aspect are often interrelated

Depression: Biological Basis

Factors influential in an individual's potential in experiencing depression are not only psychological in nature, as showcased in their social-basis and construct, but also biologically. These factors having some form of effect on the presence or absence of depression are inclusive if brain chemicals, hormones and genetic composition. Of primary importance is the prevailing nature of genetic factors, with depression often being more profound amongst the poor and discriminated segments of society. Due to increased

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hardships, violence and discrimination experienced by minority groups, their genetic make-up has become influenced negatively. These often lead to psychological imbalances, which are primarily influenced by the levels of Serotonin secreted in an individual's brain. This is vital in assisting the occurrence of various bodily functions and capacities, especially those vital in enhancing sleep, appetite, concentration and memory (Rey & Birmaher, 2009).

Reasons for High Prevalence in Minorities – the Youth Social Segment

Family unity has and continues becoming difficult to accomplish, as various affecting issues contribute to the prevalence of tensions. Social vices, addictions and behaviors are often the result of such tensions, with the negative effects further driving a wedge between social unity. It is these reasons that affect different segments of society, with youthful segment being affected. Unfortunately, it is the youthful populations, of minority groups, who experience greater levels of negative effects, not only from within their given population segment, but also from within their family units (Carlson & Donald, 2007). Adolescence is a period of various transformations in an individual's life i. e. mental, physical and emotional changes.

Subsequently, when faced with social stigma and prejudice, especially when related to the racial, gender, religio-cultural and ideological discrimination, as well as intolerance to certain sexual orientations, such youth become majorly affected.

Prevailing social, political, religio-cultural and economic aspects further complicate prevailing contexts, bringing about a sense of their loss of

identity. With this in place, an outlet is often sought through drug and alcohol abuse, youth truancy, delinquency and crime amongst other social vices. Unfortunately, due to the presence of social segmentation, which brings about seclusion and clustering of various segments of the social strata, these youth often find themselves in specific areas. As a result, a lot of their stress and anger is emitted in such contexts, with effects being primarily on their social circle and segment population. This is one of the primary reasons behind current efforts towards enhancing urban planning and social inclusion. Through enhanced social welfare, various governments continue enhancing their efforts towards the mitigation and reversal of not only depression, but also its causal factors (Wilhelm, 2006).

Depression: Treatment Procedures and Measures

Because of the great social effects, depression has on contemporary society, its treatment, mitigation and reversal has become an area of primary concern to existing governments and concerned stakeholders. Due to the nature of depression as an ailment, various treatments are available, dependent on the phase and form of depression experienced. Primarily categorized under mood disorders, depression may vary from mild depression, to the extreme manic categories. MDD - Major Depressive Disorder, BD - Bipolar Disorder, cyclothymic and dysthymic disorders are the extreme forms of depression, which consequently require advanced clinical treatment and therapy. The presence or absence of either a hypomanic or a manic episode divides the categorization of mood disorders, thus influencing the type of treatment methods to be initiated.

Depression can be therefore treated in varying ways, though there is need to

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focus on its early detection and diagnosis, especially within hospital settings. This is due to the fact that if unrecognized it may often slow down recovery, as well as worsen the existing prognosis, in cases of mental illness.

Treatment is available through various forms of medications i. e. anti-depressants, in addition to therapeutic treatment. Regarding the latter, Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT) has provided an avenue of possible treatment (Rey & Birmaher, 2009). In addition to anti-depressants, extreme depression medication includes mood-stabilizers, lithium and anti-psychotics. In addition, social support is vital, especially from close relations and friends, when faced with various life stresses. Through solid foundations, such support reduces loneliness, enhances levels of expression and thus provides avenues for increased positive treatment outcomes.

Types of Treatment Procedures

Through competent care, affected individuals are able to recover, especially when treated and guided by licensed psychologists. This is because as highly trained and competent mental health practitioners and psychologists possess adequate knowledge, skills and experiences. These are vital in the optimal treatment of depression, which requires an all-inclusive approach. Through quality treatment, depression is thereby adequately diagnosed and treated, with this eliminating the basis for other major ailments. While medication is also included, using prescribed anti-depressants; major attention is focused on psychotherapeutic methodology. This is essentially because it has and continues to being an effective avenue of treatment. It is able to alleviate symptoms experienced especially during phases of depression, thereby endearing it to many specialists as the preferred choice

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of treatment. It is in extreme cases that serious medication is required, with the exception being the prescription of anti-depressants, which augment the efforts and gains of therapy. Through pinpointing life's problems, especially those responsible for increasing stress and depression levels, depression becomes treatable. Additionally is the need to identify the existence of distorted or negative thought patterns due to their nature of contributing to the overall feeling of helplessness and hopelessness (Carlson & Donald, 2007).

In conclusion, everyone is susceptible to depression, as aforementioned, due to various factors present. However, levels of depression while being on the rise, are more profound in certain population segments than others, with minorities and especially the youth present facing the hardest of life struggles. While biological makeup does contribute to the presence of depression, especially genetically, it is the psychosocial construct of the ailment, which is of primary focus. It is through counseling sessions and therapies that greater levels of positive results are achieved. Therapies include the aforementioned CBT, in addition to Interpersonal, Narrative and Mindfulness-Based Cognitive therapies, as well as Positive Psychology and Psychotherapies.

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