

# Major depressive disorder

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This paper investigates the medical condition of a 44-year-old patient, Lisa, who unsuccessfully tried to kill herself through drug overdose. It looks at the symptoms associated with her condition and attempts to elucidate her actual pathological state. In addition, the paper proposes the actual steps that should be taken to ensure Lisa's safety. According to literature, major depressive disorder is a medical condition that manifests as a general feeling of sadness, social withdrawal and complete loss of interest in everything. This is a common psychiatric condition that affects people's feelings, thinking or behavior. In most cases, this condition could lead to emotional as well as physical problems, including a sense of worthlessness.

The diagnosis of this disease involves noting the patient's experience or reports given by his or her relatives regarding the mental stability of the concerned patient. However, this pathological state is not often detected until it is too late and the effects on the patient have become too serious. According to DSM-IV, individuals suffering from the disorder must exhibit symptoms like loss of interest or low moods for a period not less than two weeks. In fact, it must be shown that the new mood is completely different from the individual's normal behavior. Moreover, such a state must not be due to effects of drugs or social trauma resulting from bereavement (Barlow, 2005).

The other information that Lisa should have revealed to enable the doctor to accurately diagnose her condition is the length of time that the condition has persisted. This would help eliminate the chances that her condition could be due to effects of drugs like alcohol. In addition, the doctor should ask Lisa's relatives about the severity of her condition in order not be confused with

minor depressive illness. In fact, some aspects of this severity can be noted by the doctor from the nature of his or her conversation with Lisa. Typically, an individual with this disorder would not want to stay too long with the doctor, or just decide to abruptly stop the conversation midway (Watkins, 2011).

There are several other psychiatric conditions that could possibly be mistaken for major depressive disorder. For instance, a condition known as schizophrenia is presented with the similar conditions. This is basically a state of madness whereby the patients' state of mind is so disturbed that they cannot distinguish potential danger from normal life events. In fact, persons under drugs for schizophrenia are likely to attempt suicide. Moreover, the condition could easily be hypomania, which is milder than major depressive disorder.

The rationale of a possible misdiagnosis is the fact that the conditions present very similar symptoms (Mayy, 1994). The best treatment for this pathology is electroconvulsive therapy (ECT). Although, this is often expensive, it provides the best remedy considering that depressed individuals are likely to have shorter life expectancies. However, there are drugs that can properly mitigate this mental state. These include fluoxetine and tranylcypromine that come in different names depending on the country or the market.

Individuals suffering from this mental state are at a real risk of suicide. However, this can be managed by keeping vigil of the things that they do and ensuring that they are not left alone. In some instances, it may become

difficult to restrain their activities considering that they basically retain their strength. In such cases, the concerned doctor should quickly inject them with muscle depressants or hypnotic drugs, so that they could immediately fall into sleep before they can harm themselves (Watkins, 2011). In conclusion, major depressive disorder is only correctly diagnosed, when it has persisted for a period exceeding two weeks. In addition, the extent of mental incapacity must be properly determined to prevent misdiagnosis, especially with regards to schizophrenia.

However, once diagnosed, the patient should be immediately put on therapy to avoid cumulative effects on the brain. This will certainly save him or her from the risk of committing suicide.