

Depression - Treating the Black Dog

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Depression is an insidious illness that creeps up on you and bites you when you least expect it. Treatment takes time and there's no one drug that will cure everyone who suffers from depression

Winston Churchill once described depression as a black dog that constantly stalked him throughout his life. While the use of a dog as an analogy for depression might lead you to think of it in warm fuzzy terms those of us who have had the black dog at our heels will tell you that there is nothing warm nor fuzzy about depression. Depression is an illness that can be controlled to a great extent through treatment but is rarely vanquished and that means that it is with us always. Current research suggests that 7% of the US population suffers from depression and about half of those will never seek nor receive treatment for their illness. Depression is an illness that affects people from all walks of life and knows no ethnic barriers. There is no one single drug that will treat all sufferers and there is no drug that is more effective than any other. To make matters worse there are some sufferers who do not respond to any drug therapy at all. Even when people are receiving treatment for depression the situation can be difficult for those who suffer from the illness and those who treat it because drug therapy takes time. Depression is not like an infection that can be quickly treated with an antibiotic. Instead a great deal of patience is needed when it comes to treating depression with drug therapy. Instead of seeing an improvement in just a few days the various drugs used to treat depression need anything up to 12 weeks to work. For a person suffering from depression the desire for instant relief can be overwhelming and the thought of waiting three months before they might see an improvement can be daunting. Yet that is the length of time researchers are now suggesting that sufferers and doctors wait before thinking about changing medication. That may sound like a very long time to wait … especially when you're in the depths of despair but it's well-worth the wait if the treatment does work.