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The Challenges of Major Depression in the Workplace

Dr. Thomas Ungar



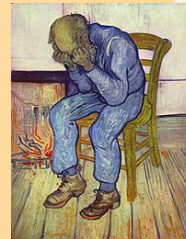
Presentation Plan

1. Depression
2. Consequences for Employees
3. Depression in the Workplace
4. Impact on Workplaces
5. Challenges in the Work Environment
6. What can be done in the workplace?



1. “Depression” or Major Depressive Disorder

- A mental disorder characterized mainly by characteristics of depression
- Conceptualized as a dimension of the expression of symptoms
- Quantifiable through symptom evaluation scales
- Historically, the burden of depression was underestimated because it was evaluated using mainly mortality statistics



At Eternity's Gate, Vincent van Gogh, 1890

CANMAT Clinical Guidelines for the Management of Major Depressive Disorder in Adults, *J Affect Disord.* 2009
DSM-IV. American Psychiatric Association, 2000

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Causes of Worldwide Disability

1990

- Lower respiratory tract infections
- Diarrheal diseases
- Perinatal disorders
- Unipolar depression
- Ischaemic heart disease
- Cerebrovascular diseases

2020 (estimation)

- Ischaemic heart disease
- Unipolar depression
- Road traffic accidents
- Cerebrovascular diseases
- Chronic obstructive lung diseases
- Lower respiratory tract infections

Murray C, Lopez A, eds. *The Global Burden of Disease.* WHO, 1996





2. Consequences for Employees 2010 Survey

Léger Marketing Survey for Pfizer Canada

- Its aim was to understand the impact of depression on the quality of life of people affected
- Conducted through the Web in May 2010 on Canadian adults:
 - 810 diagnosed with depression
 - 1587 from the general population

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Consequences for Employees 2010 Survey

- A major obstacle to work performance for 3 workers out of 4
 - 76% are overwhelmed by work requirements
 - 45% have missed days of work
 - 62% provide their full potential (vs 86%)
- Depressive symptoms often lead to disability
- A number of employees obtain sick leave
 - 67% have taken sick leave
 - 25% have taken short-term disability leave
 - 21% have taken long-term disability leave

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Consequences for Employees

2010 Survey

- Impact on social life
 - On social commitments and leisure activities (80%)
 - On family life (87%)
 - On couple relationships (82%)
- Impact on social life at work
 - 24% of workers with depression socialize during their non-work, workday hours (vs 57%)
 - 36% of them isolate themselves during breaks (vs 12%)
 - 48% worry about the impact on their relations with co-workers

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Consequences for Employees

Reduced Workforce Participation

- Impact on Workforce Participation
 - 46% less participation for women
 - 29% less participation for men
- 2010 Pfizer survey on depression
 - 82% fear being laid off



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Consequences for Employees

Depression: better known, but...

- A subject more and more understood
 - 67% of the general population recognizes that depression is a serious but treatable illness
- People with depression are slow to seek professional help

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3. Depression in the Workplace

- A concern for Canadian employers
- A frequent problem
 - 8 - 20% of the world population
 - 4 - 6% of Canadians are affected each year
- The workplace is not spared
 - 71% of people affected are workers
 - Many workers with depression are not diagnosed
 - 75% are not diagnosed

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4. Impact on Workplaces

A Growing Problem

- A major cause of short- and long-term disability
- An alarming growth in the number of cases
- A worldwide problem
 - No. 1 cause of chronic disability
 - A heavy burden for workplaces

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Impact on Workplaces

Depression and Absenteeism

- Impact on productivity
 - Lower productivity
 - Absenteeism and higher disability costs
 - More impact than other causes of disability
- Depression is often associated with other causes of disability

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Impact on Workplaces

Depression and Absenteeism

- Presenteeism: a major challenge of depression
- Loss of productivity
 - Work-related accidents
 - Conflicts, aggressions and suicides
- A major source of costs



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5. Challenges in the Work Environment

- Still a taboo subject at work
- Treatments are effective
- An illness that is under diagnosed and inadequately treated



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Challenges in the Work Environment

- High workplace stress and depression
 - Workers with high stress levels have more depressions (6% vs 2.5%)
- Dissatisfaction in the workplace
 - 1.6 - 2.5 times more depressions
- Harassment in the workplace
 - 2.3 times more depressions



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Challenges in the Work Environment

- Decision authority and support from supervisors and coworkers
 - Fewer depressions
- Impact of initiatives to reduce stress
 - Balancing work/personal life
 - Favourable management practices
 - Recognition, involvement of workers in decisions, equity, task support, etc.



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6. What can be done in the Workplace?

- The workplace can always be part of the solution
- Tertiary prevention
 - To treat workers who are mentally ill
- Secondary prevention
 - To help those who are in difficulty
- Primary prevention
 - To reduce risks at source

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What can be done in Tertiary Prevention?

- Better treatment that is likely to help
- Access to psychological therapies
- Service agreement with providers
- Return-to-work measures
- Accommodation measures

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What can be done in Secondary Prevention?

- EAP program
- Peer helper program
- Training of managers
- Training and workshops to increase resilience to stress



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What can be done in Primary Prevention?

- Company mission and policy for health
 - Guidelines to develop a policy and strategies in mental health in the workplace (WHO 2005)
- Favourable organizational practices
 - Recognition, equity, no harassment, etc.



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What can be done in Primary Prevention?

- Responsibilization of managers towards health
 - Training
 - Responsibilization towards employees' health
 - Evaluation
- Work/Life Balance



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Depression in the Workplace

A stimulating challenge...

- A problem with a very real impact on both companies and workers
- A problem for which companies can act in various ways

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