



DEPRESSION IN ELDERS

MAJOR DEPRESSION: Defined as depressed mood or a marked loss of interest that is experienced most of the day, nearly every day, for two weeks or longer. At least five of the following eight symptoms are also present:

- Unexplained weight loss or weight gain; loss of appetite
- Insomnia or hypersomnia
- Psychomotor agitation or retardation
- Fatigue or loss of energy
- Feelings of worthlessness or guilt
- Thoughts of death; suicidal ideation
- Loss of interest or pleasure in daily activities

RISK FACTORS FOR DEPRESSION

- Medications
- Concurrent medical disorder
- Life stressors and lack of social supports
- Prior episodes of depression
- Family history of depression
- History of suicide attempt
- Substance abuse

COMMON COMPLAINTS OF PATIENTS WITH DEPRESSION

- General – fatigue, anxiety, paranoia, apathy, weight loss, weakness
- Cardiac – chest pains, palpitations, fainting
- Pulmonary – shortness of breath
- Gastrointestinal – nausea, abdominal pain, diarrhea/constipation
- Genitourinary – dysuria, frequency of urination, urgency, incontinence, sexual dysfunction
- Musculoskeletal – back pain
- Neurological – memory difficulty, loss of concentration, headache, dizziness

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