

Priority Topic: **DEPRESSION**

Key Features:

Most of these study articles are still using DSM IV language. I will be on the lookout for updated versions as they are published. You do have the DSM-5 diagnostic criteria here.

For a single source on this topic: [Depression in the clinic AIM 2016](#)

Also see: [Major Depressive Disorder - StatPearls](#)

1. In a patient with a [diagnosis of depression](#) :

a) Assess the patient for the [risk of suicide](#).

b) Decide on [appropriate management](#) (i.e. hospitalization or close follow-up, which will depend, for example, on severity of symptoms, psychotic features, and suicide risk.

What you should study: see also **Priority Topic Suicide**

- ✓ [Evaluation and treatment of the suicidal patient AAFP 2012](#)
- ✓ [Évaluation du potentiel suicidaire MduQ 2014](#)
- ✓ [L'évaluation du risque de suicide chez l'ado MduQ 2017](#)
- ✓ [Informal Suicide Risk Assessment Checklist](#)
- ✓ [Suicide Assessment BMJ Infographic 2017](#)
- ✓ [Suicide high risk groups PHAC](#)

2. Identify patients who may be at a **higher risk for depression** (e.g. certain socio-economic groups, those who suffer from substance abuse, postpartum women, people with chronic pain) and assess appropriately.

What you should study:

- ✓ Relationship between Mental Health, Mental Illness and Chronic Physical Conditions CMHA
- ✓ Screening for Depression CTFPHC Guidelines CMAJ 2013

3. In patients who have **medically unexplained symptoms**, consider, and **assess for depression**.

What you should study: see also **Priority Topic Somatization**

Exam tip: Think possible SOO!

4. After a diagnosis of depression is made, **look for and diagnose** other comorbid **psychiatric conditions** (e.g. anxiety, bipolar disorder, personality disorder).

What you should study:

- ✓ Trouble de la personnalité limite et trouble de l'humeur MduQ
- ✓ Bipolar Disorders - A Review AAFP 2012

5. In a patient diagnosed with **depression**:

- a) **Manage appropriately** (e.g. medications, psychotherapy, supported self-management).
- b) **Monitor their response** to therapy and **modify appropriately** (e.g. augmentation, dose changes, medication changes).
- c) **Reassess** the patient's **safety**.
- d) **Set goals**, including a return-to-work plan.
- e) **Refer** as necessary (including community resources).

What you should study:

- ✓ **CANMAT - II Psychotherapy 2009**
- ✓ **CANMAT - III Pharmacotherapy 2009**
- ✓ **Encore un dépressif - comment le traiter sans déprimer MduQ 2012**

6. In a patient presenting with symptoms consistent with depression, consider and **rule out serious organic pathology** using a **targeted history**, **physical examination**, and **investigations** (especially in elderly or difficult patients).

What you should study:

- ✓ **Major Depressive Disorder StatPearls** (see Differential Diagnosis)
- ✓ **DDx Secondary Causes of Depression PSU 2012** – **don't forget to make a list of Hx, exam, and investigations you need to do!**

7. In patients presenting with depression, **inquire about abuse**:

- **Sexual, physical, and emotional** abuse (past and current, witnessed or inflicted).
- **Addictions** (e.g. substance use/abuse, gambling).

8. In a patient with symptoms of depression, **differentiate** major depression from **adjustment disorder, dysthymia, and a grief reaction**.

What you should study: see also **Priority Topic Grief**

- ✓ **DSM Differential diagnoses of depression**

9. Following **failure of an appropriate treatment** in a patient with depression, **consider other diagnoses** (e.g. bipolar disorder, schizoaffective disorder, organic disease).

What you should study:

- ✓ **Bipolar Disorders - A review AAFP 2012**
- ✓ **Recognition of the DDx of Psychosis in Primary Care AAFP 2015**

10. In **very young** and **elderly** patients presenting with **changes in behaviour**, consider the **diagnosis of depression** (as they may not present with classic features).

What you should study: see also **Priority Topic Behavioural Problems**

- ✓ **Childhood and adolescent depression AAFP 2007**
- ✓ **Clinical Vignettes in Geriatric Depression AAFP 2011**
- ✓ **Tristesse, crise, dépression - défis chez les ados MduQ 2017**

11. When **treating** a patient with **antidepressants**, use them in a **selective and careful manner**, adapted to the **presentation** and the **needs** of the **individual patient** by:

- Selecting the **most appropriate antidepressant and dose** for the patient based on **patient factors** and on **pharmacological factors** (e.g. possible drug interactions).
- Monitoring **medication effectiveness**, including **adherence** and the patient's **possible self-medication** using other substances (e.g. herbal and naturopathic remedies, alcohol, cannabis).
- Consider **augmentation strategies** when appropriate.
- Monitoring **side effects** carefully when initiating treatment, especially in **young and elderly patients**.
- **Discontinuing** medication **gradually**, monitoring for **relapse**, recognizing **risk**, and following **response**.

What you should study:

- ✓ Major Depressive Disorder in Adults BC Guidelines (see Management)
- ✓ Appendix C: First-Line Antidepressants BC Guidelines
- ✓ Treatment of Adult Depressive Disorder (MDD) Tool CEP
- ✓ Ottawa Depression Algorithm

12. When developing a [return-to-work plan](#) for a patient who is being treated for [depression](#):

- a) Assess the [impact of residual symptoms](#) on [work hardiness](#), [performance](#), and [safety](#).
- b) [Communicate](#) with the [patient](#) and the [workplace](#) to ensure the plan is [realistic](#) and provides [clear guidance](#).

What you should study:

- ✓ Mental Health – Return to Work CCOHS
- ✓ Mental Health – Psychosocial Risk Factors in the Workplace
- ✓ Mental Health in the Workplace CMHA
- ✓ Return to Work of Employees with Depression or Anxiety

Diagnostic Criteria DSM 5 Depressive Disorders

- ✓ Major Depressive Disorder DSM 5
- ✓ Dysthymia DSM 5
- ✓ Depressive disorder due to another medical condition DSM 5
- ✓ Substance/Medication-induced depressive disorder DSM 5
- ✓ Premenstrual Dysphoric Disorder DSM 5
- ✓ Disruptive mood dysregulation disorder DSM 5
- ✓ Other Depressive Disorders DSM 5
- ✓ Specifiers for Depressive Disorders DSM 5