

HEART BEATS



DEPRESSION AWARENESS



ILLINOIS FOUNDATION FOR
QUALITY HEALTH CARE

The Medicare Quality Improvement Organization for Illinois



Did You Know?

Between 24 and 50 percent of the elders living in nursing homes experience clinically significant depression. Long term care staff need to be aware of the potential for depression and the effects it can have on health conditions common to elders who reside in nursing homes.

Why is it Under Diagnosed?

- Unrecognized when the client was a younger adult
- Social stigma associated with mental illness prevents acknowledging depression and seeking treatment
- Masked with a history of alcohol or substance abuse
- Inability or lack of desire to express oneself in relation to mood state issues
- Medical illnesses or medications may be blamed for the mood state
- May appear as cognitive loss or be confused with a diagnosis of dementia
- Older patients are less likely to acknowledge sadness and more likely to dwell on bodily complaints
- Clinician, resident and family mistakenly believe depression is a natural consequence of old age

Negative Outcomes from Lack of Recognition

- Lack of quality of life and desire to engage in activities of interest
- Decline in physical condition due to inability or lack of desire to care for self and express needs
- Isolation and social withdrawal
- Resistance to care
- Insomnia or hypersomnia
- Substance abuse
- Poor nutritional intake
- Suicide

Benefits of Treating Depression

Recognizing and treating symptoms of depression in nursing home residents can be an important part of keeping those residents healthy in all aspects of their lives. Among elderly patients, depression may contribute as much to mortality as cardiovascular disease and diabetes.*

*American Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry report on research at the University of Pennsylvania, University of Pittsburgh and the Weill Medical College of Cornell University; Sept. 2005.

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