

Early treatment can beat Depression

Depression is one of common problems in Hong Kong, which shows symptoms in different aspects, including physical problems, social behaviors and mood and emotional distresses. According to the World Health Organization (WHO) statistics, around 100 million people suffered from depression worldwide. Some patients may encounter a prolonged depressive state that will adversely influence their health and behavior. The development of this affective disorder may be caused by heredity, special brain structural deficits and personality problem, enhanced by environmental factors, like accumulated stress or lack of social support.

Its diagnosis include depressed mood, lack of interest in participating activities, sleep disorder, change of appetite, feelings of loss of energy and unexplainable body pain, etc. People suffered from depression may also have recurrent thoughts of death, self destruction, or attempted suicide. If these symptoms have been presented for 2 weeks or more, at most of the time, medical advices from experts should be sought.

Symptoms of depression are varied across individuals, and depend on factors like the severity of the disease, age and patients' behaviors etc. Although depressive mood is the major symptom of depression, it may not be easy to identify. For example, depression may only be presented by somatic pains or persistent anger.

Statistics revealed that many patients in early stage can regain their normal life after treatment. Early detection is therefore vital for recovery. The main treatments for depression are medication and psychotherapy. Medications can maintain the balance of neuro-transmitters in the brain, like antidepressants. On the other hand, cognitive behavioral therapy is the main psychotherapy approach to change the patients' cognitive or behavioral problems. Meanwhile, more exposure to sunlight, regular exercises, as well as support from peers and family are also useful in helping people to recover from depression.