

Depression and Medical Illness

Having a physical illness can cause you to feel sad or “down”. If the sadness is severe or long-lasting, clinical depression may be co-occurring with the medical illness. Clinical depression is estimated to co-occur in approximately 40% of people with chronic medical conditions.

Depression and Medical Illness occur together for different reasons which include:

1. medical disorders may lead to biologically-based depression.
2. ill people may become depressed as a reaction to progressive pain and incapacity caused by the illness.
3. depressive symptoms may be caused by side effects of medications.
4. the depression and the medical illness may be unrelated.

Treatment of co-occurring depression can have a positive effect on the course of the medical illness, particularly when it improves a person’s ability to manage a chronic disease. In addition, treatment of depression can significantly enhance one’s quality of life.