

Those Suffering from Depression and Anxiety Disorders May Not Tell Their Doctors Everything They Should

(NAPSA)—Each year, millions of Americans visit their doctor with physical complaints such as headaches or fatigue, but few realize that these symptoms can be common signs of depression and generalized anxiety disorder (GAD), which can result in an improper diagnosis. In fact, a new survey has found that when people were asked to name the symptoms of these conditions, approximately 60 percent didn't recognize the potential physical symptoms of depression, and approximately 75 percent didn't associate physical symptoms with GAD. Although physical complaints can be signs of both disorders, the survey indicates that patients are not associating them with depression or anxiety disorders, and a proper diagnosis and treatment could be at risk.

"Many patients come to my office with vague aches and pains, and frequently they respond to pain relievers or anti-inflammatory medication," said Steven Lamm, M.D., clinical assistant professor of medicine at New York University, Bellevue. "However, if the patient also talked about emotional symptoms such as feeling sad, a loss of interest in favorite activities and spending time with friends and family, or difficulty concentrating, I may recognize these as symptoms of depression. The good news is that when both types of symptoms are presented, and depression or generalized anxiety disorder is diagnosed, proper treatment for these conditions can be recommended and remission of symptoms, which is the goal of treatment, can be achieved."

Although depression and anxiety disorders are prevalent, affecting millions of American adults each year, many people still do not know that both conditions can have two types of symptoms:

Tips For Coping With Depression And Anxiety Disorders

- Persevere to achieve remission (virtual elimination) of symptoms, not just partial improvement. With the right treatment, it is possible to get back to being yourself.
- Recognize that it might take time for you to find the treatment that works best for you. Recovery from depression and anxiety disorders is not simply a matter of taking medication, and the process requires patience.
- Allow your friends and family to share their feelings with you. Open lines of communication are essential to strong relationships, especially under difficult circumstances.
- Find the right balance between your needs and the needs of your loved ones. Your friends and family may want to carve out time to pursue their own interests and socialize.



emotional, which can include a lack of motivation, feeling overwhelmed, and excessive or constant worry; and physical, such as fatigue, vague aches and pains, and digestive disorders. For instance, digestive problems can be physical symptoms of depression and GAD. However, only three percent of people surveyed named it as a potential symptom of depression, and only one percent identified it as a potential sign of GAD. In addition, less than three percent of those surveyed named fatigue, and less than two percent recognized headaches, both of which are considered to be common physical symptoms of GAD.

Although people may know that their emotional symptoms could be associated with depression and anxiety disorders, they don't usually share both types of symptoms with their doctor. Ironi-

cally, these often are the same patients who visit their doctor seeking relief for their physical complaints. Depression and GAD have a broad range of emotional and physical symptoms, and it is important for patients to recognize and share them all with their doctor.

Symptoms of depression and GAD can last for weeks or months at a time, often interfering with daily activities. Anyone who experiences symptoms of depression for more than two weeks, or symptoms of GAD for more than six months, should consult their doctor. An accurate diagnosis that considers all emotional and physical symptoms can lead to an appropriate treatment regimen.

Depression affects more than 19 million American adults annually, and more than half of these individuals also have an anxiety disorder, such as generalized anxiety disorder or social anxiety disorder. Furthermore, approximately three to five percent of American adults suffer from generalized anxiety disorder, while eight percent suffer from social anxiety disorder annually.

The Omnibus survey was conducted in conjunction with the national depression and anxiety awareness campaign GOAL! (Go On And Live!), and was funded by Wyeth Pharmaceuticals. GOAL! was created to raise awareness about the emotional and physical symptoms associated with depression and anxiety disorders, and aims to encourage those who suffer from these conditions to seek treatment that will help them achieve remission of their symptoms.

To learn more about living beyond depression and anxiety disorders, visit the GOAL! Web site at www.GoOnAndLive.com.