DSM-5 MDD

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Key Takeaways

What is MDD?



Definition & Global Impact





Definition

Major Depressive Disorder (MDD) is the most severe form of depression. It is characterized by persistent low mood, loss of interest in activities, and significant impairment in daily functioning.

Global Impact MDD affects over 264 million people worldwide. The World Health Organization (WHO) projects it to become the leading global disease burden by 2030, highlighting its significant impact on public health.

Core Diagnostic Principle



Symptom Duration

To diagnose MDD, at least five specified symptoms must persist for a minimum of two weeks. This duration is crucial in differentiating MDD from temporary mood fluctuations.

Core Symptoms

The symptoms must include either depressed mood or loss of interest in activities. These core symptoms are essential for the diagnosis and must be present nearly every day.

Functional Impairment

The symptoms must cause significant distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning, affecting the individual's overall quality of life.

Symptom Checklist



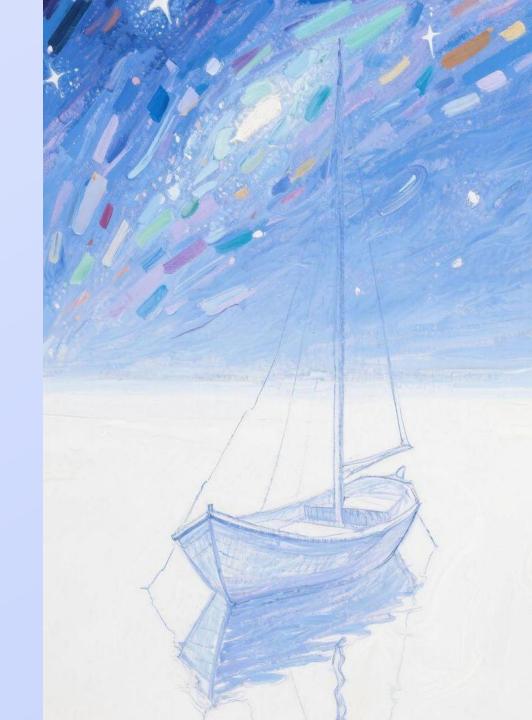




Mood & Interest Symptoms

Mandatory Symptoms

MDD diagnosis requires either depressed mood most of the day, nearly every day, or markedly diminished interest or pleasure in almost all activities. In children and adolescents, irritability can substitute for sadness.







Physical & Cognitive Signs



Appetite Changes

Significant weight loss when not dieting or weight gain is a common symptom. This can be accompanied by a decrease or increase in appetite nearly every day.

Psychomotor Changes

Psychomotor agitation or retardation, observable by others, is a symptom that can affect movement and energy levels, contributing to the severity of MDD.

Sleep Disturbances

Insomnia or hypersomnia nearly every day is another key symptom. These sleep issues can exacerbate the overall impact of MDD on daily functioning.

Cognitive Impairment

Diminished ability to think, concentrate, or make decisions is a cognitive symptom that can significantly impact an individual's ability to perform daily tasks.

Suicidality & Impairment

Suicidality

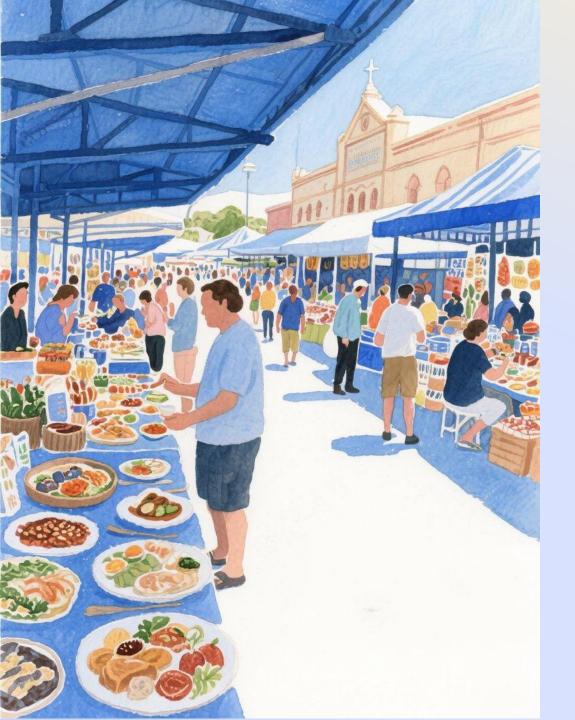
Recurrent thoughts of death, suicidal ideation, or suicide attempts are critical symptoms that require immediate attention and intervention. These thoughts can be a direct result of the severe depression.

Functional Impairment

All symptoms must collectively cause clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning, emphasizing the severity of MDD.



Exclusions & Specifiers



Rule-Out Conditions

Substance-Induced

The depressive episode cannot be attributed to the physiological effects of a substance, such as drugs or alcohol, which can mimic the symptoms of MDD.

Medical Conditions

Other medical conditions that may cause depressive symptoms must be ruled out. This ensures that the depression is not a direct result of an underlying physical illness.

Psychotic Disorders

The episode is not better explained by psychotic disorders such as schizophrenia. This distinction is crucial for accurate diagnosis and appropriate treatment.



DSM-5 Specifiers Overview

Specifiers

DSM-5 includes specifiers such as anxious distress, mixed features, melancholic features, atypical features, psychotic features, catatonia, peripartum onset, and seasonal pattern. These specifiers help refine the diagnosis and guide treatment.

Clinical Assessment



PHQ-9

The Patient Health Questionnaire-9 (PHQ-9) is a self-report tool used in primary care settings to screen for MDD. It corresponds to the DSM-5 criteria and assesses for psychosocial impairment.

Screening Tools

HAM-D

The Hamilton Rating Scale for Depression (HAM-D) is a clinician-administered tool used in hospital settings to assess the severity of depression. It provides a detailed evaluation of symptoms.

Other Scales

Other scales like the Montgomery-Asberg Depression Rating Scale (MADRS) and the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI) are also used to quantify symptom severity and monitor treatment response.

Differential Diagnosis

Bipolar Disorder

It is essential to rule out bipolar disorder, as individuals with MDD may present with depressive symptoms but have a history of manic or hypomanic episodes.

Medical Conditions

Laboratory tests and clinical judgment are used to rule out medical conditions that can cause depressive symptoms, ensuring accurate diagnosis and appropriate treatment.



Treatment Pathways



First-Line Interventions

Pharmacotherapy

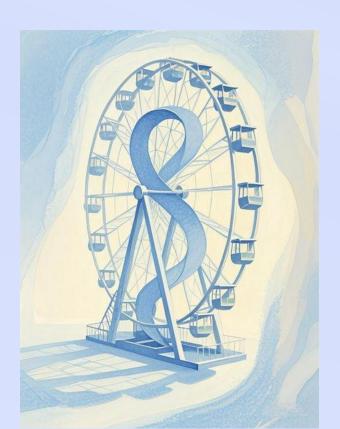
Selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs), serotonin-norepinephrine reuptake inhibitors (SNRIs), bupropion, or mirtazapine are recommended as first-line treatments for moderate-to-severe MDD.

Psychotherapy

Manual-based psychotherapy, such as cognitivebehavioral therapy (CBT), or exercise therapy may be appropriate for mild depression. These interventions can be effective in improving symptoms.



Special Populations





Mixed Features

For MDD with mixed features, combination pharmacotherapy or augmentation with antipsychotics may be necessary to manage both depressive and hypomanic symptoms.

Psychosis

In cases of MDD with psychotic features, antipsychotic medications may be added to antidepressants to address the psychotic symptoms effectively.

Peripartum Onset

For peripartum onset MDD, careful consideration of medication safety during pregnancy and breastfeeding is essential. Psychotherapy and support groups can also be beneficial.





Summary & Next Steps

Summary

MDD is a treatable, heterogeneous disorder requiring at least five DSM-5 symptoms for two weeks, careful exclusion of other causes, use of specifiers for precision, and prompt, individualized evidence-based care.

