

Lizzie McGlynn

Ms. Barrett

ENGL 1020

10 April 2020

Depression Can Affect You in Many Ways

Depression is a common and serious medical illness that negatively affects how you feel, the way you think, and how you act. It can lead to a variety of emotional and physical problems. Depression can decrease a person's ability to function at work and at home (What Is Depression?). Depression can make people feel worthless and guilty (What Is Depression?). Depression can cause loss of energy and fatigue (What Is Depression?). Depression can cause people to have trouble sleeping or they end up sleeping too much (What Is Depression?) It can cause a lot of harm. Depression is a serious disorder that needs to be paid attention to. Depression can even physically lead to death. Depression can physically lead to death when people get diseases by interacting with others sexually, when others physically hurt themselves with objects, when people turn to alcohol or even drugs, when others feed their bodies too much or too little, and when people get so mentally sick that they don't see a reason to go on.

One serious issue that can physically lead to death when people are going through depression is when some turn to sexual contact. Participating in high-risk activities can lead to an STD (Scheidelman). The activities include having unprotected sex, not always using condoms, having multiple sex partners, frequent one night stands, or exchanging sex for money or products (Scheidelman). STDs are serious illnesses that require treatment. Some STDs, like HIV, cannot be cured and are deadly (Johnson). There are all kinds of diseases like genital herpes, chlamydia, HIV, AIDs, syphilis, and many more. Untreated STDs can lead to irreversible problems in males

and females (Scheidelman). HPV can cause cancer of the cervix or throat (Scheidelman).

Syphilis, HIV, hepatitis B and C are serious diseases that can result in long term health problems and even death. People could die if they don't treat the diseases they have or take the medication they need to take.

Another serious issue that can physically lead people with depression to death is when self-harm is involved. Yes, some people hurt themselves physically. What things do they do to self-harm themselves? People cut themselves, severely scratch their skin, burn themselves, scald themselves, hit themselves, bang their heads, punch things, throw their bodies against things, stick objects into their skin, prevent wounds from healing, and swallow poisonous substances or even inappropriate objects (Smith). There comes some consequences to cutting and self-harm. People could get addicted to self-harming themselves (Smith). It may start off as an impulse or something you do to feel more in control, but soon it feels like the cutting or self-harming is controlling you (Smith). It often turns into a compulsive behavior that seems impossible to stop (Smith). It can really be hard for people to stop hurting themselves after they start. Self-harm puts you at risk for bigger problems down the line (Smith). If you keep hurting yourself over and over again, people can get badly hurt and die. People can hurt themselves badly, even if they don't mean to. It's easy to end up with an infected wound or misjudge the depth of a cut, especially if you're also using drugs and alcohol.

Many people with depression drink or abuse drugs to boost their mood or escape feelings of guilt or misery (Gonzales). However, alcohol and other substances with depressant properties can escalate sadness or lethargy (Gonzales). Using substances to alter negative feelings can become a cycle, hindering someone's ability to obtain successful treatment for depression (Gonzales). Alcohol and substance abuse can start out as a mild problem and gradually turn into

more severe problems (Galbicsek). People can get all kinds of diseases from abusing yourself with substances. People can get stomach inflammation, muscle tissue diseases, heart disease, birth defects, liver disease, and much more (Diseases Caused From Alcohol and Drug Addiction). Alcohol or drug overdose can lead to severe mental and physical health consequences and even death (Lautieri). Alcohol and drugs are a depressant. Those things might help at the moment when people take the drugs and drink the alcohol, but it really doesn't help in the long term. If people take drugs and drink alcohol at the same time, it can be twice as bad. In combination, alcohol and drugs strongly suppress breathing (How Drugs Can Kill...). Without oxygen, organs and tissues are damaged (How Drugs Can Kill...). That's really bad if organs and tissues get damaged. Usually, the brain is affected first, and the damage may not be reversible (How Drugs Can Kill...). Once the brain is affected, there's no cure. In result, people can die from substance abuse.

Another way people with depression can physically lead to death is if they starve themselves or they end up eating too much and end up becoming sick. People with depression often use food to self-medicate (Uscher). They may eat to improve or avoid negative or uncomfortable feelings, like sadness, shame, and self-loathing (Uscher). Many people crave carbohydrates or soothing comfort foods, such as ice cream and cake, when they're depressed. You know the feeling when people are sad and all they want to do is eat a carton of ice cream? Well, food high in carbs and sugar increase levels of serotonin, a brain chemical that elevates mood (Uscher). Eating foods high in sugar and fat may make you feel calmer and cared for (Uscher). That's why it's so easy to turn to junk food all the time because it makes us feel better in the moment. A steady diet of comfort foods can lead to weight gain and increase your risk of heart disease, diabetes, and other serious health problems (Uscher). On the other hand, many

people find that their appetite decreases when they're feeling low (Uscher). In some cases, they end up unintentionally losing weight (Uscher). They have less desire for food, and they start skipping meals – often, they sleep through meals (Uscher). People just may not feel the motivation or energy to eat when they are depressed. Also, stress can play a role in reducing your appetite (Uscher). Food tends to not be appealing when you're feeling anxious, worried, or feel hopeless (Uscher). Not eating enough can make you more irritable and sensitive, which can worsen your depression (Uscher). Shopping for and preparing healthy meals can seem daunting when you're depressed and lacking energy (Uscher).

Another way why people with depression can physically die is from their minds. The mind is a powerful thing. We all have times where we think negative about ourselves. Nobody is positive all the time. There's not a person that thinks positive all the time. You may act positive all the time, but that doesn't mean that you don't think negatively. Depression in fact manifests in negative thinking before it creates negative affect (Marano). Most depressed people are not aware that the despair and hopelessness they feel are flowing from their negative thoughts (Marano). Thoughts are mistakenly seen as privileged, occupying a rarefied territory, immune to being affected by mood and feelings, and therefore representing some immutable truth (Marano). Although a person who doesn't have depression will have a normal mix of positive and negative thoughts each day, but having depression tends to make you filter the world through negative thoughts to the point it distorts reality and your overall outlook on life (Myers). Instead of seeing the glass as half full, people may see it as empty (Myers). The negative thinking can get so bad it can lead to suicide. A result is the person can form a chemical imbalance and can lead to the person not understanding the options available to help them relieve their suffering (Suicide and Depression: Connection...). In other words, they don't see a reason to go on. They physically

can't find any positives or reasons to keep going. Emotions and even physical pain can be unbearable (Suicide and Depression: Connection...). Those people don't want to die, but it's the only way they feel their pain will end (Suicide and Depression: Connection...).

My best friend goes through depression. She has basically struggled with it her whole life. She was born with cerebral palsy. She has never been able to walk a day in her life. My friend really hasn't gotten to experience being out of the "special needs world". She's in fact smarter than all the other students in her class. She has the ability to learn and read. Actually, in elementary school she took regular classes with an aide by her side, but in high school things changed. The rules didn't allow for her to do that, so she got put in a classroom filled with other people with disabilities. They were learning things Katie, that's her name, had already knew how to do. For example, they were learning simple math problems, learning how to spell four letter words. Because she was in that classroom and they were doing things like that, that made Katie feel miserable. She had always struggled with depression, but she really started struggling with it in high school. She has more friends without disabilities and so she hated that she couldn't see them that often. There had been times where she would come home every day and just cry out of frustration, anger, and sadness. There had been days where she just hated herself and wanted to end her life. Sometimes she constantly has to get reminded that even though she can't walk, even though she has a disability, that she has a purpose on this earth.

Knowing all of this information is important so that if you know someone that's close to you that is going through depression you can help them. By knowing all the ways that depression can physically kill you can help someone or multiple people. It can help let the people that know someone struggling with depression what they might be going through. That's one reason why this argument will help people. Another reason why this argument will help others is it'll help

spread awareness. Depression is a serious disorder that people need to know about so that they can tell more people about it. Some people die by suicide because of how depressed they are. I think the more people that know about it the less people will die from it.

Works Cited

“Diseases Caused From Alcohol and Drug Addiction.” *Find Rehab Centers Based On Your*

Needs, 17 Apr. 2019, www.rehabcenter.net/diseases-from-addiction/.

Galbicsek, Carol. “Drinking and Drugs: A Dangerous Combination.” *Alcohol Rehab Guide*, 24

July 2019, www.alcoholrehabguide.org/alcohol/drinking-drugs/.

Gonzales, Matt, and Krisi Herron. “Depression and Substance Abuse.” *The Recovery Village*,

28 Jan. 2020, www.therecoveryvillage.com/mental-health/depression/substance-abuse/#gref.

How Drugs Can Kill and How to Stop Them, learn.genetics.utah.edu/content/addiction/drugskill/.

Lautieri, Amanda, and Sophie Stein. “What Are the Signs of a Drug or Alcohol

Overdose?” *Sunrise House*, 27 Feb. 2020, sunrisehouse.com/cause-effect/overdose/.

Marano, Hara Estroff. “Depression Doing the Thinking.” *Psychology Today*, Sussex Publishers,

1 July 2001, www.psychologytoday.com/us/articles/200107/depression-doing-the-thinking.

Myers, Wyatt. “Depression: How to Challenge Negative Thinking - Major Depression Resource

Center - Everyday Health.” *EverydayHealth.com*, www.everydayhealth.com/hs/major-depression/how-to-challenge-negative-thinking-from-depression/.

Smith, Melinda, et al. "Cutting and Self-Harm." *HelpGuide.org*, 14 Feb. 2020,
www.helpguide.org/articles/anxiety/cutting-and-self-harm.htm.

"Suicide and Depression: Connection, Facts, and Statistics." *SAVE*, save.org/about-suicide/mental-illness-and-suicide/depression/.

Uscher, Jen. "Depression Food Traps: Eating Too Much, Eating Too Little, and Unhealthy Choices." *WebMD*, WebMD, 27 June 2011,
www.webmd.com/depression/features/depression-food-traps#1.