

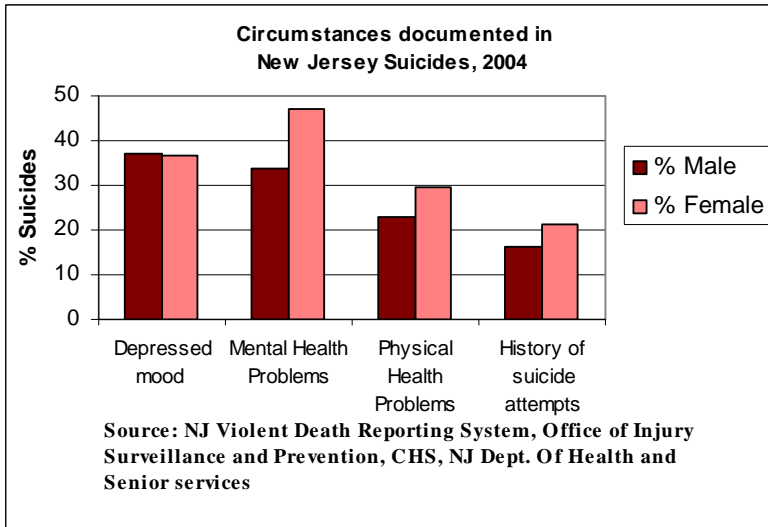


HEALTH DATA FACT SHEET

November 2006

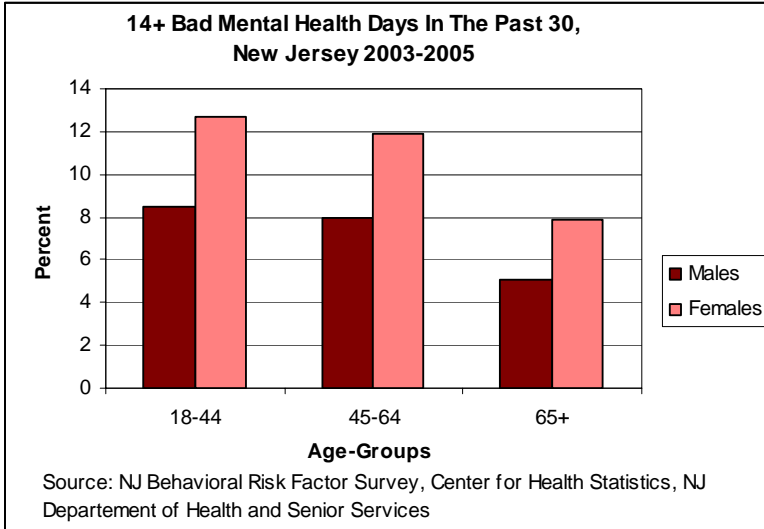
Depression

- ❖ Depression is one of the world’s most common diseases. Depressive disorders affect an estimated 9.5 percent of adult Americans in a given year, or about 20.9 million people.
- ❖ Each year, major depressive disorder affects approximately 14.8 million American adults, or about 6.7 percent of the U.S population age 18 and older. It is also the leading cause of disability in the U.S for ages 15 to 44 and is more prevalent in women than in men.
- ❖ There is no single cause for depression. Some types of depression run in families, suggesting that a biological vulnerability can be inherited. Often, a combination of genetic, psychological, and environmental factors is involved in the onset of a depressive disorder.
- ❖ The main types of depression include major depression, dysthymia, adjustment disorder, bipolar disorder, and seasonal affective disorder (SAD).
 - Major depression is a mood disturbance that lasts more than two weeks. This is the most serious type of depression in terms of the number and severity of symptoms.
 - Dysthymia is a less severe but more chronic form of depression. Having dysthymia places you at an increased risk of major depression.
 - Adjustment disorders occur when an individual response to a stressful event or situation causes signs and symptoms of depression. It can be acute (lasting less than six months) or chronic (lasting longer).
 - Bipolar disorder, also referred to as manic-depressive disorder, manifests as recurrent episodes of extreme “lows” to excessive “highs” or mania.
 - SAD is a pattern of depression related to changes in seasons and a lack of exposure to sunlight.
- ❖ Depression can also result from hormonal changes during and after pregnancy. Pregnancy related depression can occur before or after childbirth, and can range from mild to severe. The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists estimates that 70-80 percent of new mothers experience a mild short-lived depression, (often referred to as “baby blues”) after childbirth. This condition can include symptoms of sadness and anxiety and may start within three days of giving birth and can last up to 14 days.



- ❖ A far more severe type of childbirth-associated depression is postpartum or peripartum depression (PPD). Approximately ten percent of new mothers are diagnosed with PPD in the first year after giving birth. Sadness, anxiety and restlessness are associated with PPD, and these feelings can interfere with daily activities and a new mother’s ability to bond with her baby

- ❖ People who suffer with major depression are at increased risk for suicide. In 2004 there were 640 suicides committed in New Jersey. Over 460 of these people had a history of documented mental health illnesses.
- ❖ In New Jersey (2003-2005), female residents ages 18 to 65+ (11.4%) were more likely to report frequent (14+) bad mental health days in the past 30 days than were males (7.7%). The number of bad mental days reported declined at ages 65 years and older.



- ❖ Depression affects people of all ages and all races. However, studies have found that the rates are lower among married people, especially married men, and people in long-term, intimate relationships. Depression is more likely to go unrecognized in older adults.
- ❖ To diagnose depression, a physician should initially perform a physical examination, including tests to rule out medication-related conditions and/or medical conditions that can cause symptoms that mimic

depression. After a physical cause for the depression is ruled out, a psychological evaluation is done, usually by a psychiatrist or psychologist.

- ❖ Depression can often be treated successfully. The most commonly used treatments are psychotherapy and antidepressant medication. Some people with milder forms of depression may do well with psychotherapy alone, while others with moderate to severe depression often benefit from antidepressants. Most patients respond best with combined treatment.

Sources:

NJ Department of Health and Senior Services, Center for Health Statistics, [New Jersey Behavioral Risk Factor Survey](#): unpublished data.

New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services, Center for Health Statistics: [New Jersey Violent Death Reporting System, Office of Injury Surveillance and Prevention](#): unpublished data.

National Institute of Mental Health: [Depression](#)
[Depression: A Treatable Illness](#)
[The Numbers Count: Mental Disorders in America](#)

The Mayo Clinic: [Depression](#)

The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists: Answers: [Spotlight on Postpartum Depression](#)

Continuing Medical Education: [Depression: An Overview](#)



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