BRAIN 2021

SESSION 6: MAJOR DEPRESSIVE DISORDER

Despite being one of the most common psychiatric illnesses – and one of the oldest areas of biological psychiatry research – current treatment of depression still falls short. According to the World Health Organization, depression remains a leading cause of disability worldwide. More than 40,000 people die from suicide annually in the United States and more than 800,000 worldwide.

This may finally be changing. Over the past 15-20 years, cutting-edge research has led to new models for understanding and treating depression. We no longer talk about a "chemical imbalance." Modern perspectives include circuit-based approaches and the neurotrophic model. Crucially, these ideas are translating into new approaches for treatment – with numerous early successes. Dig in to this week's self-study resources to learn what's going on and then join your pod to dive into What To Say When Patients Ask!

On Your Own

Read or Watch:

Reshaping the Depressed Brain: A Focus on Synaptic Health or **"Sad Synapses"**

The Habenula: Darkness, Disappointment, and Depression or **"Computational Approaches to Psychiatric Illness"**

Read:

Changing the Way We Think About (and With) Antidepressants

Watch:

"Simple Logic"

"The Neuroscience of Kafka"

ECT

With Your Pod (Or on Your Own)

What to Say When Patients Ask:
The Electrochemical Brain: Lessons from the Bell Jar and Interventional Psychiatry

Assessment

At the end of Session 6, you should be able to do the following:

1. **Describe the neurotrophic model of depression.**
2. **Describe a circuit-based model of depression (including answering the question: *What the hell is the habenula?!?!*).**
3. **Describe what early changes occur with antidepressant medication treatment (i.e., in the first 1-2 weeks) and how they might be relevant to both clinical practice and research.**
4. **Describe in patient-centered language how ECT works.**

When you're ready, click here to submit your responses.

Fun Extras!

Watch:

This 'Stuff' is Really Cool: "The Hedgehog and the Virus"