

## **Current subjects on depression**

## **Temas atuais em depressão**

Depressive disorder contains several of the main characteristics of a priority in Public Health. It is prevalent, highly incapacitating and, in general, relatively easy to diagnose and treat.

Paradoxically, depression – as all other mental disorders – receive, in Brazil and in the developing world, resources, which are not only insufficient, but also frequently wrong, originated in the absence of public health policies, or, sometimes, of highly ideologically biased policies that lack scientific evidence to support their efficacy.<sup>1</sup>

In the last years, the *Revista Brasileira de Psiquiatria* (RBP) has published articles about specific subjects involving depression.<sup>2-4</sup> However, due to the clinical importance of the subject, RBP's editors chose to elect the subject "Depression" as the focus of this supplement. Its conception was based on the idea of focusing subjects which could be useful for the clinical psychiatrists.

Evidently, this supplement is not aimed to exhaust the different perspectives about the subject. Rather, it has sought much more to select themes that may be useful for the clinical practice and/or to challenge and question the diagnosis and treatment of depressive disorders.

The supplement "Depression: Current subjects" comprises five articles written by international and national authorities on the subject's treatment and research.

The first article, called "*Major depression invites major concerns*", has as its first author professor Gordon Parker. Besides being an important researcher in the field, he is a "thinker" of Contemporary Psychiatry. His consistent and well-grounded questionings make us reflect about Psychiatry's directions. In the study, he summarizes in a very didactic and concise way his ideas and critiques about the problems involved in the concept of major depression and its repercussions in the clinical practice and research.

In the second article, "*Revision of the guidelines of the Brazilian Medical Association for the treatment of depression (Complete version)*", a group of national authors representing different institutions in the country reviews the guidelines developed by the Brazilian Psychiatric Association for the Brazilian Medical Association. The original document of 2003, published in RBP, was updated according to the same path of the first one, that is, it has utilized guidelines developed in other countries and adapted to the Brazilian clinical reality.

In the third article, "*Which are the recent clinical findings regarding the association between depression and suicide*", authors from Brazilian and Canadian centers have accomplished an interesting update about the relationship between suicide and depression, regarding what the recent research has to offer to clinicians.

In the fourth article, "*Electroconvulsive therapy in major depression: current aspects*", authors from two Brazilian centers with tradition in the use of electroconvulsive therapy perform a review about the subject. Electroconvulsive therapy, although being the oldest biological treatment available, is still challenging prejudice and has shown, in light of contemporary research, an unquestionable efficacy in the treatment of major depression with new and intriguing mechanisms possibly involved.

Lastly, a group of researchers from a Canadian center presents an interesting review, called “*Transcranial direct current stimulation: a promising alternative for the treatment of major depression?*”. In this article, it is accomplished a description of a technique recently applied in Psychiatry, but due to its simplicity and low cost it may become an interesting therapeutic resource in developing countries.

We hope that the supplement “Depression: current subjects” may fulfill its function, by providing the best scientific information as to enable mental health professionals to review and update concepts, stimulating the search for excellence in their clinical practice.

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## Disclosures

Writing group member	Employment	Research grant <sup>1</sup>	Other research grant or medical continuous education <sup>2</sup>	Speaker's honoraria	Ownership interest	Consultant/ Advisory board	Other <sup>3</sup>
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\* Modest

\*\* Significant

\*\*\* Significant. Amounts given to the author's institution or to a colleague for research in which the author has participation, not directly to the author.

Note: UFRGS = Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul; HCPA = Hospital de Clínicas de Porto Alegre; CNPq = Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico; FIPE/HCPA = Fundo de Incentivo à Pesquisa do Hospital de Clínicas de Porto Alegre.

For more information, see Instructions for authors.

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