

DEBUNKING MISinformation

TikTok video: Claims that depression is not real, equating it with temporary sadness and suggests that individuals can overcome it through willpower. Depicts depression as a conscious choice and that individuals feel depressed after a moment of sadness, heartbreak or trauma.

WHY THIS IS MISINFORMATION?

The video is wrong because it falsely claims that depression is not real and dismisses it as temporary sadness that can be overcome by "choosing" to move past it. Depression is a recognized mental health condition made up of complex biological and psychological underpinnings. It is not a matter of simply "redirecting" negative energy or pushing through it. Unlike brief moments of sadness, depression is persistent and debilitating, often lasting for weeks, months, or even years. It cannot be reduced to fleeting emotional states or overcome simply through willpower.



DEPRESSION IS REAL

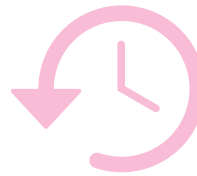
ESTIMATED TO AFFECT OVER 300 MILLION INDIVIDUALS WORLDWIDE [1]

≈4.4% OF TOTAL GLOBAL POPULATION [1]

WHY THIS MATTERS?

This misinformation is especially harmful because it outright denies the existence of depression as a legitimate mental health condition. By claiming depression is not real, the video can indirectly encourage people to dismiss those who are struggling, making them feel invalidated or that their suffering is not worthy of attention. Moreover, by framing depression as just temporary sadness, it may prevent patients from reaching out for help, and discourage them from seeking treatment, as they may believe their condition is not valid or serious enough to warrant professional care.

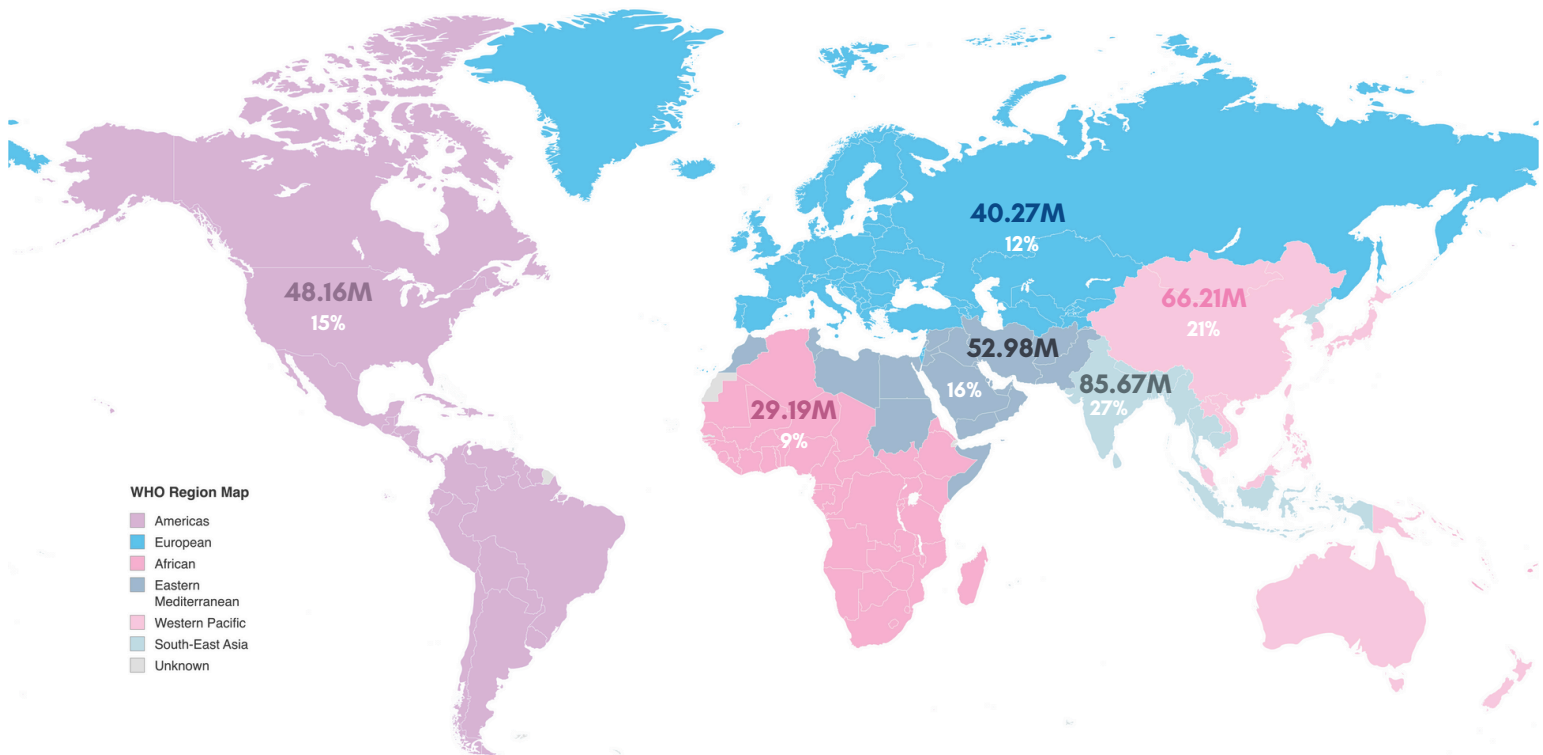
HISTORICAL DESCRIPTIONS



EARLIEST SYSTEMATIC DESCRIPTION: 5TH CENTURY BCE, REFERRED TO AS "**MELANCHOLIA**" BY HIPPOCRATES [2, 3]

19TH CENTURY: "DEPRESSION" EMERGED AS "MENTAL DEPRESSION" DESCRIBING A DECLINE IN MOOD [2, 3]

DEPRESSION ACROSS THE GLOBE [1]

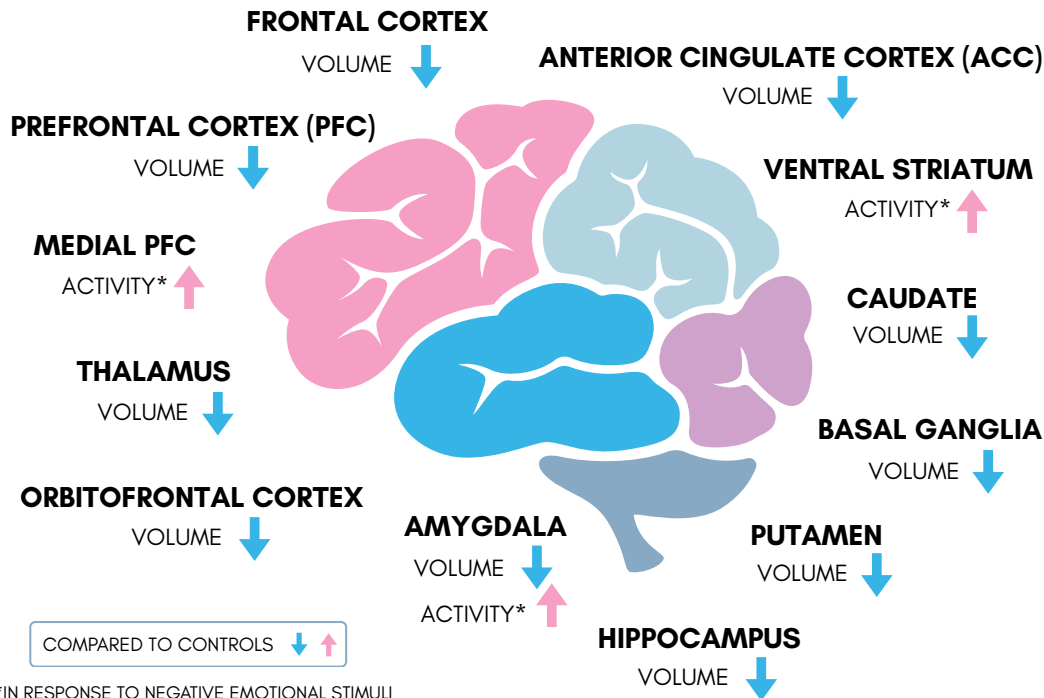


[1] World Health Organization [WHO], 2017; [2] Craighead et al., 2017; [3] Paykel, 2008

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REPORTED BRAIN CHANGES IN DEPRESSION [4, 5, 6, 7]

BRAIN STRUCTURES



NEUROMODULATORS

BRAIN-DERIVED NEUROTROPHIC FACTOR (BDNF) ↓

PRO-INFLAMMATORY CYTOKINES ↑

INTERLEUKIN-1 β , INTERLEUKIN-6, AND TUMOUR NECROSIS FACTOR- α

MONOAMINE NEUROTRANSMISSION ↓

SEROTONIN AND NORADRENALINE



DEPRESSION IS COMPLEX AND INVOLVES MULTIPLE GENES AND ENVIRONMENTAL INTERACTIONS [5].

SOME GENES POTENTIALLY IMPLICATED IN DEPRESSION [8]:

- SEROTONIN TRANSPORTER GENE (SLC6A4), SPECIFICALLY THE 5-HTTLPR VARIATION
- SEROTONIN RECEPTOR 2A GENE (HTR2A)

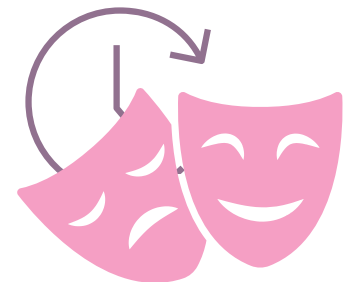
DEPRESSION $\neq$ SADNESS, A CONSCIOUS CHOICE, OR TEMPORARY MOMENT

SADNESS IS A **NATURAL, TEMPORARY RESPONSE** TO LOSS, WHEREAS DEPRESSION IS MARKED BY **PERSISTENT** NEGATIVE BEHAVIOURAL AND COGNITIVE PATTERNS THAT SIGNIFICANTLY IMPAIR DAILY FUNCTIONING. UNLIKE SADNESS, WHICH RESOLVES OVER TIME, DEPRESSION INVOLVES **RECURRING DISRUPTIONS** THAT CAN **SEVERELY IMPACT** A PERSON'S ABILITY TO FUNCTION [9].

PERSISTENT DEPRESSIVE DISORDER (PDD) = DEPRESSION THAT PERSISTS FOR AT LEAST 2 YEARS [10]

ALTHOUGH DEPRESSED MOOD, WHICH INCLUDES SADNESS, IS A CORE SYMPTOM OF DEPRESSION, **PEOPLE CAN STILL BE DIAGNOSED WITH DEPRESSION WITHOUT BEING SAD** [11, 12].

ATYPICAL DEPRESSION = SIGNIFICANT MOOD REACTIVITY (UPLIFT IN MOOD IN FACE OF ACTUAL OR ANTICIPATED POSITIVE EVENTS) [13]



[4] Fakhoury, 2015; [5] Kupfer et al., 2012; [6] Palazidou, 2012; [7] Porter & O'Connor, 2022; [8] Lohoff, 2010; [9] Leventhal, 2008; [10] Nübel et al., 2020; [11] American Psychiatric Association, 2013; [12] Mouchet-Mages & Baylé, 2008; [13] Łojko & Rybakowski, 2017

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