

Depression in older people

Depression is not part of normal ageing

Depressive symptoms are common in elderly (10-20 % in primary care setting)

One fifth of all elderly seen in primary care have a depressive condition

Less than half get a diagnosis and adequate treatment

Older people at risk of depression

- Recent (<3 months) major physical illness or hospital admission
- Chronic illness/Long term conditions
- In receipt of high levels of home care
- Recent bereavement
- Socially isolated people
- Those people persistently complaining of loneliness
- Patients complaining of persistent sleep problems

Depression is treatable

Management

- Identify & treat medical problems
- Assess risk of suicide and self-neglect
- Look out for alcohol/drug misuse
- Offer treatments
 - Antidepressants
 - Talking treatments
- Regular follow-up
- Referral to psychiatric services, when necessary