

REGIONALNI CENTAR ZA TALENTE VRANJE

**DEPRESSION IN TEENS: A SCARY PROBLEM
DEPRESIJA KOD TINEJDŽERA: STRAŠAN PROBLEM**

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Abstract

The word *depression* comes from a latin word “depressionem” which means to press down. The word is also used as a term for something being below sea level. People have suffered from depression since ancient times. It appears for many reasons. A big portion of depressed people are teenagers. This happens because human beings tend to experience a lot of changes. People are different from each other and that is why everyone reacts differently to changes that usually appear at this age. Consequences of depression are serious and should not be treated as unimportant. Big parts of depressed teenagers lose interest in people, start doing drugs, and in some cases they take a way out in form of suicide. Adolescence is arguably the most important period in human life as it determines what kind of a person someone will be. At this age people are fickle and their self image is changing frequently. Depression is sometimes presented because of one’s searching for identity. Identity crises are one of the biggest problems teenagers face because of their constant search for one. Because of how fickle and fragile teenagers are it is of utmost importance that a teenager does not get influenced for his/hers all life because they were depressed during adolescence.

Key words: depression, adolescence, changes, consequences, fragility

Rezime

Reč *depresija* potiče is latinskog jezika od reči „depressionem“ što znači biti pritisnut dole. Reč se takodje koristi kao izraz za nešto ispod nivoa mora. Ljudi pate od depresije još od antičkog doba. Pojavljuje se iz mnogo razloga. Veliki deo depresivnih ljudi su tinejdžeri. Ovo se dešava zato što ljudska bića sklona ka osećanju velikih promena. Ljudi su drugačiji pa zato svako drugačije reaguje na promene koje se obično pojavljuju u ovom dobu. Posledice depresije su ozbiljne i ne bi trebalo da se tretiraju kao nebitne. Veliki deo depresivnih tinejdžera gube interes za ljude, počinju da koriste droge, i u nekim slučajevima uzimaju izlaz u vidu samoubistva. Adolescencija je argumentovano najvažniji period u ljudskom životu zato što odlučuje kakva će neko biti osoba. U ovom periodu ljudi su veoma povodljivi i njihova slika o samom sebi se često menja. Depresija se ponekad prezentuje zbog potrage nekog za identitetom. Kriza identiteta je jedan od najvećih problema sa kojima se tinejdžeri suočavaju zbog konstantne potrage za jednim. Zbog toga koliko su povodljivi and krhki tinejdžeri, veoma je bitna da na život tinejdžera ne utiče što je bio/bila u depresiji tokom adolescencije.

Ključne reči: depresija, adolecencija, promene, posledice, krhkost

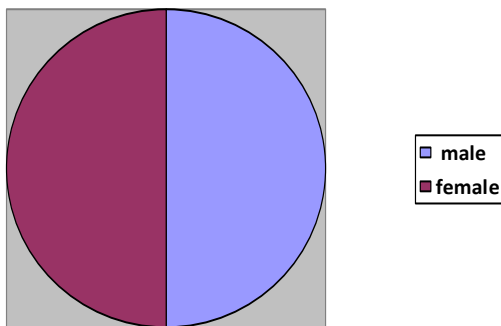
Depression is a disorder that contains low mood and aversion to activity that can affect a person's thoughts, behavior, feelings and sense of well-being. People who suffer from depression often lose interest in their hobbies, in spending time with their loved ones, feel empty, anxious, hopeless, guilty, restless, useless...

Depression is looked at negatively and is sometimes thought of as a way of “kids looking for attention”. This results in making this an even more serious problem. Consequences of depression can be extremely serious because it can result in one taking his/hers own life. Being sad and feeling “blue” are normal reactions to life’s struggles, setbacks, and disappointments. Many people use the word “depression” to explain these kinds of feelings, but depression is a much more serious problem.

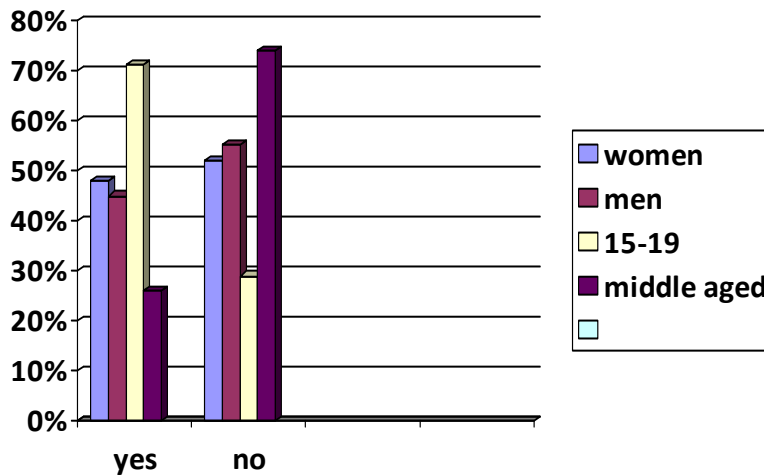
Some people describe depression as “living in a black hole” or having a feeling of doom. However, some depressed people do not feel sad at all—they may feel lifeless, empty, and apathetic, or men in particular may even feel angry, aggressive, and restless.

General data about the survey

The number of people who participated in this survey is 100 and they are divided into two groups in order to get the most of the survey. These two groups are made according to which sex they belong to and how old they are (15-19 and middle aged people). They were given ten questions that can be found in the appendix (page 10). In order to utilize this survey to full extent some of the results will be displayed in charts below. In order to get the best results 80 people were 15-19 and 20 were middle aged. Round numbers were chosen on purpose for getting the easiest results. Half of the people surveyed were male and half female.



When asked if they were depressed:



15-19 secondary school students

There were exactly 80 people who filled in the survey for this category. About 40 male and 40 female and they are separated so we can see how their opinions and answers are different if they are different at all.

Male

When asked the first question a lot of them knew what depression was, but it is more some general knowledge and it is not entirely correct. "Feeling sad" is the most frequently given answer with 35% (14 males), 60% (24) answered some form of "mental state because of poor well being" and 5%(2) said some form of "mental illness".

Before analyzing other questions we can analyze the answers. We can see here how many misconceptions there are about depression. People still think that it is just someone feeling slightly sad and that is not serious. Once again, as it is important to point out: depression *is* a serious mental disorder. The 14 people who said "mental state because of poor well being" are partly correct because it is not a state but a mental disorder. And the 5% who said mental illness is also a good example of how badly depression is understood.

To the second question, when asked if they have suffered from depression 48%(18) of them said yes and 52%(22) said no. This is a result that shows how much depression is serious.

To the question number three, 80%(32) said that they do know someone who suffered from depression.

The fourth question was if they think that depression is a serious problem and 62.5% (25) and 37.5%(15) said no. A lot of people who said that depression is a serious problem also circled that they have suffered from depression.

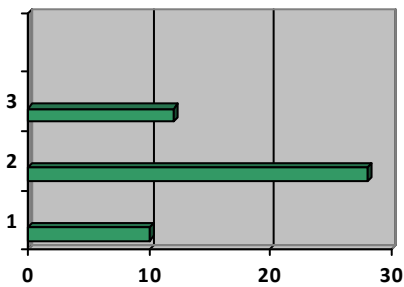
The fifth question was how they would help someone who is depressed and the results were following: 42.5%(17) said they would tell someone who can help, 40%(16) said they would ask him/her what to do and respect his/her wishes, and 17.5%(7) said they would try to cheer him/her up. It is important to point out that the last answer is a bad one because “cheering someone up“ is not going to work because depression is a disorder, it is not a “phase“ someone goes through.

The sixth question was who they think is most likely to get depressed: a secondary school student, a middle aged person or an elderly person. Fourteen of 40(35%) said a middle school student, 19 (47.5%) said a middle aged person and 7 (17.5) said someone elderly.

We got mixed results regarding this question as all the suggested answers are correct – people of all ages are equally prone to getting depressed. When asked if they would speak out if someone they knew was depressed 60%(24) said they would and 40%(16) said they would not. If you do know someone that is depressed it is a more complicated matter than just speaking out or not. If we want to help, we have to look at all the things related to the situation that that depressed person is in. For example, if he/she is from some conservative family that would not accept or would not do anything about it, you should consider talking to someone else beside his/her parents; if someone is a public figure and cares about his/hers reputation, you should probably try to find someone who would not spread a rumor and harm a depressed individual and cause even more serious depression.

The question number eight was how their family would react if they knew they were depressed. The results were following: 13% (5) said that their family would be angry at them, 25%(10) said that their family would support them, 45%(18) said their family would be disappointed and 18%(7) said that they would just tell them to cheer up. Now, this question was designed specially for middle schoolers and the results were interesting. The ones that said their family would be angry and disappointed were honest and if more people who filled in the survey were more honest the percent would be even higher. These families probably consider depression as a bad thing that their kids have control over because they probably do not have enough facts and are not informed as well on matter of depression. Ten (25%) said that their family would support them. I am not saying that this result is not true, it perhaps is, I am just saying that if people were just a little bit more honest that this number would be lower. And 18%(7) think their family would tell them to cheer up. There are three ways family can react to hearing about their loved one being depressed: they could be supportive and try to help them, they would think that it is not a big deal and they should just try to think positively and cheer up and they could be angry with a depressed person because he/she is a failure and a disappointment for having a mental disorder. Because of the results regarding this question, people should get informed about depression because it is much more serious than how it is currently viewed.

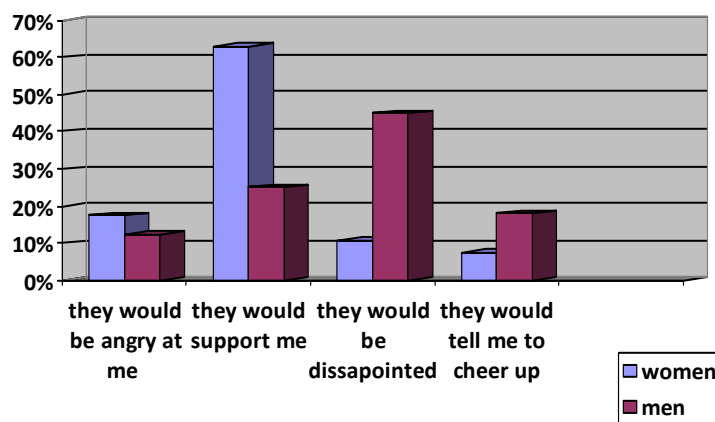
The question number nine was “What are the most likely causes for someone to get depressed?”. The answers are: 17.5% (7) wrote poor financial state, 27.5% said bad childhood, 20 % (8) said abuse and 35% said deceased love one. And there are many more causes for someone to get depressed, some of them are: identity crises, sexuality crises, illness, death, bad situation in love life/work/school, bullying, being unable to do something he/she wants etc. When people were asked how they would rate depression from 1-3 the results were:



The scary part is that 10%, therefore four people out of forty think that depression is not that big of a deal. Which it absolutely is!

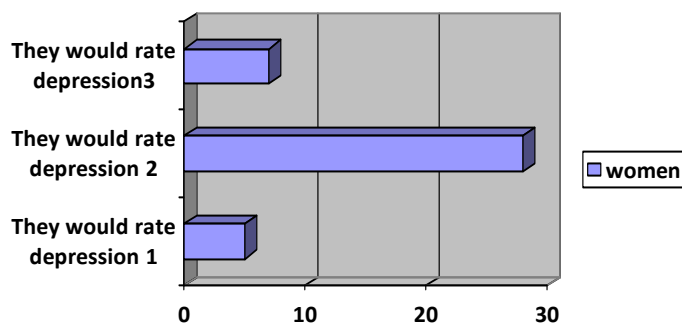
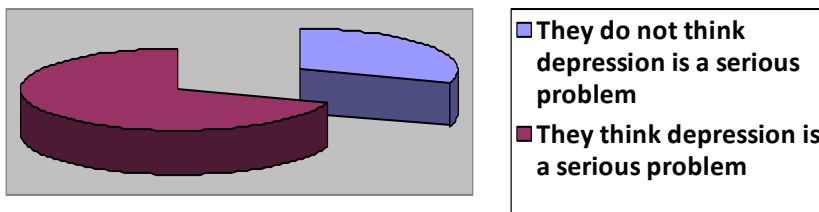
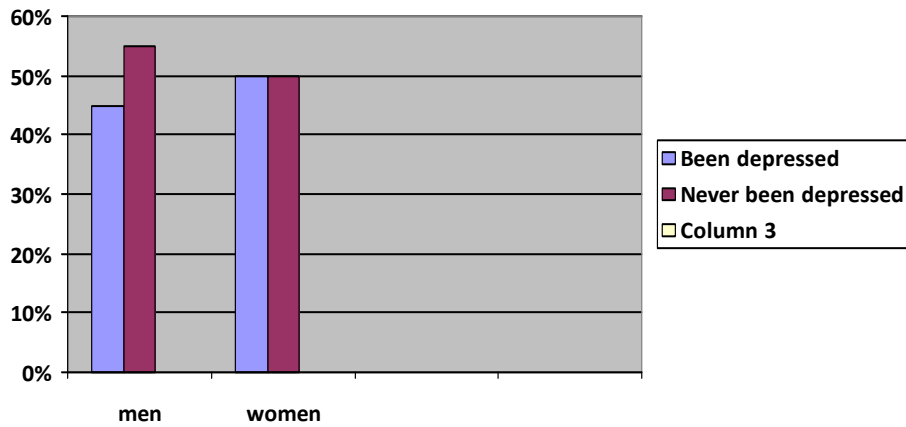
Female

The results for females are not different than male ones except for a few things. There were 20 (50%) of females who said that they *did* suffer from depression. Females and males are not that different which can be concluded from this data but this was an anonymus survey so there was not any social pressure on males, let me elaborate. From young age women are taught to be sensitive to express their feelings because it is social norm for a woman to act that way. Men on the other hand are taught to be strong, not to talk about feelings, focus on sports and being tough. Women are twice more likely to have being treated for some mental disorder. This is simply because men are embarrassed to admit they have a problem. The other thing that is really extraordinary are results to the question number eight.



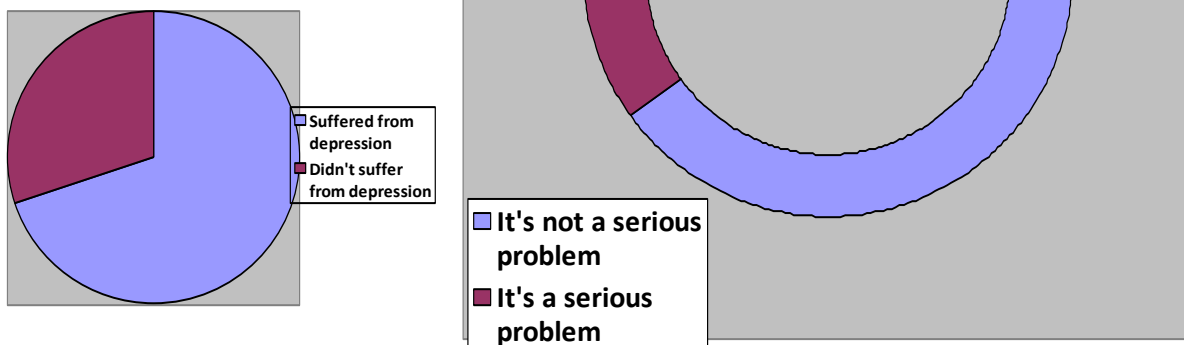
The notable difference is that men answered that they would be supported 25% (10) and women answered that they would be supported 62.5% (25). And there is an another example of how men and how women are viewed by society. Totally 45% of men answered that their family would be dissapointed at them while that is the case only for 12.5% of women surveyed. These are some of

the graphs related to how women answered the questions asked because there is not much to analyze here as it is not really different from the men's answers.



Elderly people

Elderly people were given the survey and answered about the same as previous category with a few difference that are quite interesting. There were no differences between the sexes so the results will not be shown separately. When asked if they think depression is a serious problem, 65% (13) said that it is not and only 35% (7) said that it is a serious problem. This result is astonishing because we can really see how depression was considered in the past. A lot of elderly were taught in a different way and think that this “depression thing” (what one of elderly called it) is just new age fiction and is not a big deal. While public opinion about depression did change, it is still looked at this way by some. And when they were asked how difficult depression is 65% (13) circled one, 25% (5) circled two and two people circled four. The answer to the question if they have suffered from depression is the most different than the results of middle-schoolers, 70% (14) have not suffered from depression and 30% (6) have suffered. Charts are below.



Conclusion

From the results of the survey we can conclude that a vast majority thinks that depression is not a big of a deal. It has to do a lot if they did suffer from it or not. People have a problem of being too self absorbed and that results in everyone thinking that their problems are the scariest, biggest and other people just like having imaginary problems. This results in people thinking that people have imaginary diseases that cannot be really proven. Such examples are depression, ADHD (to some degree), compulsive disorders etc.

Generally about depression in the past people were taught that it was not a big deal to just shake it off, and stop being crybabies. Things are getting better as seen how new generation completed the survey in comparison to elderly people. But, it is still bad to see 35% of young people say that depression is not a serious problem.

If you suffer from depression get help. If you know someone that suffers from depression consider their situation before trying to help them. Proper ways to deal with depression is going to a therapist and getting medication if that therapist gives you prescription for them. It is NOT good to ignore depression and think it will just disappear, because in some cases it can end a life, get someone in a big problem because of taking drugs and it can turn into a lot of different problems, like anxiety and panic attacks.

To conclude, be patient with depressed people, get them help if their situation is right for it and be considerate. Differences in opinions can also cause depression and are a big part of the problem. Because of different priorities and perception versus the reality of the situation both adults and adolescents can be depressed.

	Grown ups	Adolescents
Priorities	Job comes first Focus on the future	Pleasure comes first Focus on present
Perception of consequences	Think about future consequences	Notice just immediate consequences
Perception of danger	Overestimate risk	Underestimate risk

Note: I got these results based on the survey I conducted, but because only 100 people took part in that survey, these results can not be regarded as results of the whole world, but results of a limited number of people who completed the survey.

Appendix

1. How would you describe depression?
2. Have you ever suffered from depression?
3. Have any of people you know suffered from depression?
4. Do you think depression is a serious problem?
5. How would you help people that are depressed?
6. Who do you think is most likely to suffer from depression: a middle school teenager, a middle aged person or an elderly person?
7. If you knew someone who suffered from depression would you speak out?
8. How would your family react if you have told them that you are depressed?
9. What are the most likely causes for someone to get depressed?
10. If you were depressed on scale from 1 to 3, how would you rate how difficult it was going through depression?

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A thesis defense on „Adolescence“ by **Biljana Petrovic**, „Fakultet za specijalnu edukaciju i rehabilitaciju“ university in Belgrade, graduated 2000. And got a title of **Graduated special pedagogue for prevention and resocialization of people with disorders in social behavior.**

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