

PSYCHIATRY NOTES

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Psychopharmacology and Psychotherapy for Adults, Adolescents, and Children

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DEPRESSION HITS ONE IN TEN ADULTS

The prevalence of depression among adults in the U.S. stands at 9%, according to a Center for Disease Control (CDC) analysis of survey data. CDC analysts looked at data from the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) surveys conducted in 2006 and 2008 among 235,067 adults in 45 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

The survey data revealed that the prevalence of major depression was highest -- at 4.6% -- among those ages 45 to 64 and lowest (1.6%) among those 65 and older. Prevalence among young adults 18 to 24 was 2.8%. Women were more likely to report more major depression than men (4% versus 2.7%), and people lacking health insurance were more likely than the insured to report signs of major depression (5.9% versus 2.9%).

Depression -- of any degree -- had its biggest impact when examined by employment status, with 39.1% of those classified as unable to work reporting current depression and 22.2% of them reporting major depression. Among those who were unemployed, 21.3% were currently depressed, and 9.8% reported major depression. State public health departments should continue to conduct surveillance on depression, targeting populations at risk and in need of intervention, CDC recommended.

WELL-BEING IMPROVES AFTER RETIREMENT

Leaving the work force may improve one's health, a large, French cohort study showed. Among workers at a French national gas and electricity company, retirement was associated with sharp reductions in mental and physical fatigue, as well as more modest reductions in depression, according to researchers in Sweden. "Although observational data cannot prove causality and rule out residual confounding, the findings provide unique evidence that retirement is related to improvement in well-being, with little effect on risk of chronic disease," they wrote. The authors said the findings could have important implications as the population ages.

REVERSING AGEING... IN MICE

Here is an interesting news item from the *Psychiatric Times*: If a mouse has cancer, there are some very good treatments ... or so the cancer researchers quip. The same may be true if a mouse gets old, according to researchers reporting in *Nature*.

As mammals age, the tips of the chromosomes -- the telomeres -- get progressively shorter. And mice that are lacking an enzyme that rebuilds those tips suffer from tissue atrophy, stem-cell loss, organ failure, and impaired healing, according to Ronald DePinho, MD, of the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute in Boston, and colleagues.

But in mice that are genetically engineered so the enzyme could be turned back on, several of those effects were reversed, leading to -- among other things -- the creation of new brain cells, and an improved sense of smell.

The findings hint at strategies to reverse aging in other mammals, including those performing the experiments.

The downside is that -- as is often the case in cancer -- only the mice have benefited so far.

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