

Results: Of the 3488 participants, 12.5% (436/3488) met criteria for depression. Of the population, 8.9% had a mild depression and 3.9% met criteria for a moderate to severe depression. Depression was statistically significantly higher among women, adults living alone, those separated or divorced, and those unemployed, working part, casually employed or a student. Individuals with a degree or higher level of education, and those earning above \$40 000 were significantly less likely to have depression.

Conclusions: The demographics for those with depression are consistent with previously published studies of depression in the community. However, the rates of depression were higher than that seen in other South Australian, Australian and international studies. The possible reasons for this will be discussed.

Use of the web in the self-management of bipolar disorder

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Background: Poor treatment adherence in people with bipolar disorder is common, and 40% relapse within a year. Education and support assist sufferers to self-manage their condition and reduce hospitalizations, but the challenge lies in providing them in a convenient, private and nonstigmatizing manner.

Computer-based programs are acceptable to patients and efficacious, but debate exists about whether additional support is needed to maximize effects. This paper reports a study evaluating a web-based education program for people with bipolar disorder.

Methods: Developed at the Black Dog Institute by health professionals, community representatives and consumers, the Bipolar Education Program aims to help individuals and their families better understand the condition, recognize early warning signs, reduce triggers, develop self-management skills and enhance treatment compliance. Modules involve audiovisual presentations, questions and answers, advice from well-known people with bipolar disorder and printouts.

A randomized controlled trial (RCT) is being conducted, comparing three versions of the program (on its own, with email support from an informed person, with informed support plus assistance to implement a 'stay-well' plan) to minimal online education. Measures are being taken at pre-, post-, 3 and 6 months follow-up of clinical and psychosocial outcomes, and costs.

Results: Since its May 2006 launch, the Web site has recorded approximately 2000 visits per month. About 75% of first-time visitors have been women, 55%

aged 31–50, 44% with bipolar disorder (predominantly ≤ 12 months since diagnosis), 28% carers/family/friends and 18% health professionals. The RCT is about to commence, data from which will be presented at the conference.

Keeping Care Complete: results from the first international schizophrenia and bipolar disorder family caregivers survey

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Background: The international shift toward community care and the deinstitutionalization of people with mental illness has seen much of the responsibility for day-to-day care transferred to family members. This responsibility can be associated with profound psychosocial, physical and financial impact. Keeping Care Complete is the first large, international survey of carers of people with schizophrenia or bipolar disorder.

Method: About 100 Australian carers were enrolled in an eight-country survey of 982 carers of people with schizophrenia or bipolar disorder. Participants were asked a series of questions regarding treatment, treatment discontinuation, relapse, satisfaction with treatment and carer burden. This was done by means of a 30-min telephone interview.

Results: Australian carers are much involved in their family member's treatment: 80% of those surveyed reported being the primary carer, 42% spent more than 20 h/week caring for their relative and 19% were responsible for administering medications. For 97% of carers, family support was the key factor, as well as medication, for keeping their family member well and 70% of the participants were frustrated by the low expectations for long-term improvement set by health care professionals.

Conclusion: This survey provides significant insights into the experiences of carers of people with mental illness and helps quantify the impact of this responsibility on carers in terms of their physical, mental and financial well-being.

A randomized controlled trial to assess the efficacy of omega-3 fatty acids as a treatment for depression during the perinatal period

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