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## ROLE OF MEDIA TO INFORM PUBLIC ABOUT DEPRESSION RELATED DISEASES

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### Abstract

*Communication is very important tool to inform and aware people through many mass media tools like radio, television and internet. It is also a basic necessity for transferring views and feelings of one individual to other or one community to other. Nobody can survive in this world without communication. In this context, health is something a worldwide concept. Depression is one of the major diseases which affect human body. So communication through media is necessary in order to make people aware about the remedies or precautions for this illness. Depression is all behind human feelings, thinking and action. It causes feelings of sadness or a loss of interest in activities once enjoyed. It can lead to a variety of emotional and physical problems too. According to American psychiatric Association- Depression affects an estimated one in 15 adults (6.7%) in any given year. Depression can strike at any time, but on average, first appears during the late teens to mid-20s. Women are more likely to experience depression than men. This paper will try to find out the real role of media to disseminate information of depression and will highlight the comparative data of rural and urban areas specific to depression related diseases. It will also try to find out the deficiencies and challenges facing by media in spreading information related to this deadly disease.*

*Keywords- Health issues, depression, mass media, health communication, radio & TV broadcasting, deficiencies in health promotion.*

### Introduction

The health communication is a strategic communication science process that helps us confront imposing public health challenges. The process includes using multiple behavioral and social learning theories and models to advance program planning, and identifying steps to influence audience attitudes and behavior. Effective health communication is essential because it equips the public with the tools and knowledge to respond appropriately to health crises such as flu outbreaks, dengue, HIV/AIDS, malaria etc. This has been honed into a strategic communication science process that helps us confront imposing public health challenges. Media is an only tool which makes public aware regarding events in across the country and cross the country. Its role is not limited to aware public with the events happening in their surrounding areas but to alarm public with health issues and that must be the major area of media houses. **There was a great role of communication by media in polio eradication efforts in improving the lives of children of India**(Renetaschiavo, senior Lecturer in Socio-medical Sciences). Health has always been a primary concern of every government as well as NGOs and media is the only tool which can be used to reach public sitting at any corner of the world. Like many diseases depression has become a major fever which has taken life of many people. Mental health is integral and very important concept need to be discussed by every media on every stage for our well-being and making us physically healthy. Media like television and

radio keep alarming people for getting rid of depression but there is very less full-fledged broadcasting programmes by television and radio about the remedies of depression. Many studies like "Awareness about depression syndrome and related preventive practices have been conducted to know the effect of depression and to know to climate responsible for spreading of depression but I have not found any study which would have talked about the role of television and radio in spreading knowledge for the ways to come out from depression. This paper will try to find the effect and role of media for overcoming the major illness depression. **This research paper is insight knowledge to understand the challenges or problems coming in the way of media to broadcast content for remedies of depression.**

### Objectives of the study

- To find out the programmes by which media could reach to the large audience related to depression related diseases.
- To find out the different marketing techniques to make depression related exercises easily accessible by public.
- To identify the main challenges faced by researchers and media channels in the field of depression communication.
- To discuss ethical values and the use of new technologies and instruments for communication related to depression.

### Depression

Depression is a common illness Caused by persistent sadness, anxiety and tension. It creates symptoms like loss of interest in activities, loss of energy in daily work and sleeping more. It also reduced concentration, make a person indecisiveness and restlessness, feelings of guilt and worthlessness. In this situation a person lose hope from everything and thoughts of self-harm are created inside the mind of a person. Depression is categorized in three levels mild, moderate, or severe on the basis of number and severity of symptoms. It is well acknowledged that depression influences the occurrence and outcomes of several diseases and conditions. Depression and suicide are closely interlinked and when it comes to at its worst stage, it can lead to suicide. **7th April is celebrated as World Health Day.** It provides us a unique opportunity to mobilize action around a specific health topic of concern to people all over the world and **the theme for World Health Day campaign in 2017 was depression.** The growing incidence of mental health issues is a reflection of the reality that confronts us today. Depression can affect anyone at any age. So this campaign was important for every person of any age, sex, or social status.

### Development of Depression in India

Depression is an extremely common illness affecting every socioeconomic groups and religions in India and all over the world. Globally, an estimated 322 million people were affected by depression in 2015 (WHO). Depression contributes to many other significant disease related to mental as well physical. At the individual and family level, depression leads to poor quality of life, causing huge social and economic impact. Depression is one of the two diagnostic categories that constitute common mental disorders (CMDs), the other being anxiety disorder. Both are highly prevalent across the population (hence they are considered "common") and impact on the mood or feelings of affected persons.

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Depression includes a spectrum of conditions with episodes, illnesses and disorders that are often disabling in nature, vary in their severity (from mild to severe) and duration (from months to years) and often exhibit a chronic course that has a relapsing and recurring trajectory over time. **Globally, depression is the top cause of illness and disability among young and middle-aged populations, while suicide 2 ranks second among causes of death for the same age groups (WHO).** Depression is also a cause of several non-communicable and communicable diseases such as ischemic heart disease and diabetes, cancer and nutritional disorders, TB, HIV and others. Depression often results in impaired functioning, which has an impact on all aspects of an individual's life and family affecting multiple areas of education, marriage, work and social life. These in turn lead to loss of productivity, increased health care costs and significant emotional suffering. People with depression are also unable to access quality health care due to increasing costs. In India, out of every 10 persons one is under depression and this figure is increasing day by day.

### **Why is it important to address**

Depression is a major illness in India which is creating significant morbidity, disability as well as mortality. It is affecting large numbers of children, adolescents, middle-aged groups and the elderly. Depression and suicide are closely interlinked with each other and at its worst stage it leads to suicide. Recognizing depression at an early stage is critical for reducing suicidal deaths and deliberate self-harm across the spectrum. People with depression are often stigmatized and excluded by family and society. They also tend to under-perform in education and work, thereby remain increasingly deprived of economic and social opportunities, with a decreased quality of life. People with depression do not get adequate care due to various reasons, ranging from non-availability of services to prevailing stigma and discrimination. So it is very important to talk about this illness. Government should strengthen the health system through appropriate staff training and uninterrupted supply of drugs. There is also a need of availability of psychotherapy, counselling services, good referral systems and continuity of care.

### **Role of Media**

There is a very important role of mass media for health promotion because it has the ability to reach very large audiences but media is lacking towards health communication to some extent. There are not any regulations for radio, television or other media to set particular time for health related debates and talks. Audience disparity is also a major reason for that. Media messages should be designed specifically for particular target audiences. Messages should be designed in their local languages. People-doctors participation should be compulsory. Documentaries and short films on health problems should be produced by media. The media can be used as the primary change agent or as a means to support other education and clinical services. Media can be categorized in four stages like media as educator, media as supporter, media as program promoter and media as supplement. In these four stages, media can be used as an unaided form of intervention to educate or to support lifestyle changes and as a complementary intervention to promote or supplement the effects of other health promotion interventions.

### **Facts and findings related to Depression by WHO**

- A [WHO report](#) suggests that India is the most depressed country in the world.

- According to the World Health Organization (WHO), One out of every five Indians is suffering from a mental disorder.
- 50% of corporate India is under chronic stress.
- Number of suicides are increasing due to depression in the age between 15-55.
- At the moment, India spends 0.06% of its total health budget on mental healthcare.
- An average of 300 people - 200 men and 100 women - commit suicide every day due to mental disorder.
- At least 20 percent of young people experience some form of mental illness.
- In December 2015, it was reported that there are 3,800 psychiatrists and 898 clinical psychologists across the nation.
- Only 43 government institutions and less than 26,000 hospital beds are dedicated to mental health patients.

In this paper survey was conducted in the two colleges named DAV College, Jalandhar and Khalsa College, Amritsar. In these colleges, I asked questions from different students from class +1 to MA. I selected 50 students of each college randomly. All the students were between the age of 16-25. I have also asked questions from 50 people each in urban and rural areas of Amritsar. I took people in the age of 25 to 55 in these areas. The questions were total of 25 in numbers and were divided in four sections: (i) Demographic profile (ii) Practices related to depression control (iii) Knowledge regarding depression (iv) Sources of information regarding depression and (v) Nature of Programmes Broadcast by media. To collect the data House-to-house visits were conducted and total 100 students and 100 people in rural and urban household were taken.

Nature of the participant	No of persons involved in study in urban area out of 50		No of persons involved in study in rural area out of 50		P e r c e n t a g e	
A g e ( 2 5 - 5 5 )	5	0	5	0	1 0 0 %	- 1 0 0 %
M a l e	3	0	2	5	6 0 %	- 5 0 %
F e m a l e	2	0	2	5	4 0 %	- 5 0 %
Knowledge about depression	5	0	4	5	1 0 0 %	- 9 0 %
Aware about depression symptoms	4	0	3	0	8 0 %	- 6 0 %
Depression effected	4	5	3	0	9 0 %	- 6 0 %
Not effected with depression	5		2	0	1 0 %	- 4 0 %

Majority of the respondents 100% from urban area and 90% from rural area were aware about depression while 80% respondents from urban and 60% from rural were aware about syndromes related to depression. 90% respondents from urban and 60% from rural area were suffering from depression.

Nature of the participant	No of students involved in study from Khalsa College, Amritsar		No of students involved in study from DAV College, Jalandhar		P e r c e n t a g e	
A g e ( 1 6 - 2 5 )	5	0	5	0	1 0 0 %	- 1 0 0 %
M a l e	4	0	3	5	8 0 %	- 7 0 %
F e m a l e	1	0	1	5	2 0 %	- 3 0 %
Knowledge about depression	4	0	3	5	8 0 %	- 7 0 %
Aware about depression symptoms	4	0	4	0	8 0 %	- 8 0 %
Depression effected	3	0	4	0	6 0 %	- 8 0 %
Not effected with depression	2	0	1	0	4 0 %	- 2 0 %

According to the students, 80% students from Khalsa College, Amritsar and 70% from DAV, Jalandhar were aware about depression while 80% students from both areas were having knowledge about depression syndromes. 60% of students from Khalsa College, Amritsar and 80% from DAV College, Amritsar were suffering from Depression.

Source of Information	Urban	Rural	Khalsa College, Amritsar	DAV College, Jalandhar	Percentage
Radio	5	10	10	5	10% - 20% - 20% - 10%
Television	5	5	5	5	10% - 10% - 10% - 10%
Newspapers	20	20	15	20	40% - 40% - 30% - 40%
Internet	20	15	20	20	40% - 30% - 40% - 40%

In this study television, radio and newspapers were taken as a source of information about depression. 10% from urban area, 20% from rural area, 20% students from Khalsa College, Amritsar and 10% students from DAV, Jalandhar said that they got information about depression from radio while very less students and people from urban/rural told about television and maximum public from urban/rural and students got information from newspapers and internet.

This shows that television should give more space to programmes which covers health related shows. Television should call doctors and experts of specific diseases at different times to have debates on it so that people could have deep knowledge about these kind of diseases. Depression has become a fatal disease in these days so television should cover more and more depression related programmes with ample of information.

### Conclusion

It is crystal clear that depression is one of the major illness spreading among people. sometimes people do not even realize that they are suffering from depression and they go to normal chemist shops for increasing their energy and work stamina. Subsequently, they come to know that they were under depression and that is why they are feeling anxiety, tension and low energy. Although there are many lectures on Internet related to depression but other means of media like television and radio should work more toward this side. Government should also work hard to educate public for mental related problems. It is not very common illness but gradually it is paving roots very deep among many countries. Campaigns in the community through the media houses and compulsory participation of effected people and doctors should be mandatory. In addition, special debate and interview programmes related to depression should be broadcasted by media. So that appropriate specific action can be taken for the control of this disease.

### Future prospective of this study

- (a) particular social networking sites can be involved for future study.
- (b) Effective communication by seminars or workshops related to this problem can be involved.
- (c) Youngsters below the age of 15 can be involved in this study in order to know the use of online media to search this particular disease.
- (d) The above observations may be true only for the study population of specific area because of convenient sample is taken in this study and it cannot be generalized to other populations belonging to different socio-economic or cultural backgrounds.
- (e) This study can be expanded to National level.



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