The Effect of Outdoor Physical Activity on Adults With Clinical Depression

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# The Effect of Outdoor Physical Activity on ADULTS WITH CLINICAL DEPRESSION

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## Background

- Depression is one of the most common mental health disorders in the U.S.
- Depression affects 300 million people worldwide regardless of age, gender, race, etc.
- Depression affects 18 million adults alone every year (1 in 10 adults).
- Depression is the leading cause of disability for ages 15-44.
- Depression is the main cause somebody dies of suicide every 13 minutes.
- In comparison, homicide claims less than 16,000 lives a year.

**Source:** The Policy Lab

### Main Causes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Depression Causes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Genetics</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brain chemistry</td>
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<tr>
<td>Imbalance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Poor nutrition</td>
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<td>Physical health</td>
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<td>ISS</td>
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<td>Drugs</td>
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<td>Stress</td>
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**Source:** Factors that could increase Your risk of Depression By Nancy Schimelpfening

There are many factors in an individual’s life that contribute to the mental health disorder of clinical depression. The mental illness does not discriminate and can also occur in the lives of Adolescents. As illustrated above, some of the most common factors that can cause depression are genetics, brain chemistry imbalance, poor nutrition, physical health issues, drugs, and stress (Schimelpfening 1). Clinical depression is not only a brain disorder, but also a state of mind. The question remains how does one with clinical depression overcome the disorder?

### Symptoms:

- Fatigue
- Feelings of Sadness
- Irritability
- Weight loss or gain
- Loss of Interest
- Suicidal Thoughts

**Source:** The Policy Lab

### Treatment Known To Date:

- Medication
- Psychotherapy
- Lifestyle Changes

**Source:** Healthline

## Study Objectives

The purpose of this study is to see what the affect of outdoor physical activity has on the mental status of individuals with clinical depression. This mental disorder affects numerous individuals every year putting their state of mind in severe conditions sometimes resulting in suicide. Clinical depression is not a visible disorder; therefore it is important to find further cures for individuals who may be affected by the mental disorder. Finding more cures for the individuals affected can prevent suicide rates and better the lives of individuals who are struggling to cope with clinical depression.

## Results

### Data analysis of outcomes that occur when individuals with clinical depression perform outdoor physical activity.

#### Outdoor Activity Outcomes:

- **Happiness**
- **Motivation**
- **Relief Of Stress**
- **Confidence**
- **Lower Cortisol Levels**

Outdoor physical activity overall promotes positive mental health statuses and individuals with clinical depression that consistently perform outdoor physical activity will naturally benefit from positive mental thoughts.

### Conclusion

Research has proven that it is very important to encourage the use of outdoor physical activity to individuals who have clinical depression. The effects of clinical depression can cause someone to feel lonely and sad, therefore encouraging constant outdoor physical activity will produce positive psychological thoughts instead. Treatment for clinical depression can also be costly. Outdoor physical activity most of the time can be performed at no cost and can be performed through a range of activities. Such activities can be walking around a neighborhood or going for a hike. Whether an individual is an adolescent or an adult, outdoor activity has been proven several times to increase positive thoughts and decrease depressive symptoms.

**Source:** American Psychology Association

As individuals age, the amount of physical activity slowly declines. Physical activity needs to be encouraged due to the amount of Americans that are being diagnosed with depression every year. Clinical depression is also a worldwide disorder that will only continue to worsen if proper precautions are not taken. Through constant outdoor physical activity being performed and encouraged, we can help individuals who suffer from being in such a state of mind cope comfortably with the condition at no cost.

### Future Implications

Research indicates clinical depression will grow more common in younger individuals. Due to social media playing a huge part in the lives of many young adults and adolescents, it is easier for younger individuals to be exposed to many different aspects of the world faster. Younger generations will start comparing themselves to others online when they do not even have a strong concept of what life is made up of yet. Clinical psychologists and other mental health professionals are very aware of this and are doing their best to stay on top of new developments to help treat future individuals with clinical depression as best they can.

**Source:** ABC News

## References


