



Depression Disconnect: GeneSight® Mental Health Monitor Shows Misunderstanding of Depression and Treatment

New poll shows 83% of people with depression agree life would be easier if others could understand their depression

SALT LAKE CITY, April 28, 2021 – In a new nationwide poll, the GeneSight® Mental Health Monitor found that 83% of people with depression agree that life would be easier if others could understand their depression. Yet, most people who have not experienced depression may not be able to understand the challenges, including its treatment.

“Depression is one of the most misunderstood disorders. When people misinterpret patients with depression as ‘lazy’ or ‘dramatic,’ they are vastly underestimating and misunderstanding the debilitating symptoms of major depressive disorder,” said Mark Pollack, M.D., chief medical officer for the GeneSight test at Myriad Genetics. “That is why we are working with the Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance, so that loved ones can offer more empathetic support and people with depression won’t feel so alone.”

For Mental Health Awareness Month (May), GeneSight and the Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA) have partnered to raise awareness and understanding for how a person who has major depressive disorder feels, and why it can be so hard to seek treatment.

Lack of Understanding and Empathy about Depression

Three out of four people living with depression said they desire support from their loved ones including just listening or saying supportive things like: “How can I help?” or “Do you want to talk about it?”. Instead, nearly half of those with depression said they were more likely to hear statements like: “You need to get over it/snap out of it” or “We all get sad sometimes”.

“Depression is a serious but treatable medical condition that affects how a person feels, thinks, and acts. Though typically characterized by feelings of sadness, depression symptoms may appear as irritability or apathy,” said Michael Thase, M.D., professor of psychiatry, Perelman School of Medicine and the Corporal Michael J. Crescenz VA Medical Center, and DBSA scientific advisory board member. “We must work together – providers, patients, family and friends – to continue to reduce the impact of stigma. Misunderstanding the disorder may lead to people feeling embarrassed and/or unwilling to seek the treatment they need.”

Nearly half of those either diagnosed with depression or concerned they may have depression say they feel ashamed/embarrassed when others found out they were suffering from depression, according to the GeneSight Mental Health Monitor.

Pandemic Prompts Search for New Treatment

More than half of those diagnosed with depression indicated in the poll that they started a new medication since the start of the pandemic. Nevertheless, for some, starting a new depression medication doesn't guarantee success.

More than half of people diagnosed with depression said they have tried four or more depression medications in their lifetime, with nearly 1 in 4 respondents reporting they have tried six or more medications to try to find relief.

"I couldn't get out of bed to take care of my children, much less go to the doctor multiple times to try new medicines that 'might' help," said Amanda, a 25-year-old woman who was diagnosed with major depressive disorder. "The years of trial and error were so frustrating and discouraging. You feel like you are stuck living that way."

Those who indicated in the GeneSight Mental Health Monitor that they had experienced the trial-and-error process described the experience as:

- "On a rollercoaster" (51%)
- "I'm just waiting for the next side effect" (45%)
- "Walking through a maze blindfolded" (44%)
- "Playing a game of darts, only I'm the dartboard" (42%)

While 4 in 10 of those diagnosed with depression say they are not confident that their depression medications will work for them, 7 in 10 would feel "hopeful" if their doctor recommended genetic testing as part of their treatment plan.

Genetic testing, like the GeneSight Psychotropic test, analyzes how a patient's genes may affect their outcomes with medications commonly prescribed to treat depression, anxiety and other psychiatric conditions.

"With just a simple cheek swab, the GeneSight test provides your clinician with information about which medications may require dose adjustments, be less likely to work, or have an increased risk of side effects based on a patient's genetic makeup," said Dr. Pollack. "It's one of many tools in a physician's toolbox that may help get patients on the road to feeling more like themselves again."

Conquering the Depression Disconnect

While 7 in 10 adults said that they are more conscious about their own or others' mental health challenges than they were before the pandemic began, less than half of adults are very confident they can recognize if a loved one is suffering from depression, according to the GeneSight Mental Health Monitor.

For a better understanding of depression and treatment, visit [KnowMentalHealth.com](https://www.knowmentalhealth.com). For more information on how genetic testing can help inform clinicians in depression treatment, please visit [genesight.com](https://www.genesight.com).

The GeneSight® Mental Health Monitor

The GeneSight Mental Health Monitor is a nationwide survey of U.S. adults conducted by ACUPOLL Precision Research, Inc. in March 2021. The survey was conducted among a statistically representative sample of U.S. adults age 18+, including a U.S. representative sample of adults who have been diagnosed with depression. The margin of error in survey results for the total base population at a 95% confidence interval is +/- 3%.

Myriad Genetics

Myriad Genetics, Inc. is a leading genetic testing and precision medicine company dedicated to advancing health and wellbeing, empowering individuals with vital genetic insights and enabling healthcare providers to better detect, treat and prevent disease. Myriad discovers and commercializes genetic tests that determine the risk of developing disease, accurately diagnose disease, assess the risk of disease progression, and guide treatment decisions across medical specialties where genetic testing can significantly improve patient care and lower healthcare costs. For more information on how Myriad fulfills its purpose, please visit the company's website: www.myriad.com.

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The GeneSight® Test

The GeneSight Psychotropic test from Myriad Genetics is the category-leading pharmacogenomic test for certain medications commonly prescribed for depression, anxiety and other psychiatric conditions. The GeneSight test can help inform doctors about how a patient's genes may impact how they metabolize or respond to certain psychiatric medications. It has been given to more than one million patients by tens of thousands of clinicians to provide genetic information that is unique to each patient. The GeneSight test supplements other information considered by a doctor as part of a comprehensive medical assessment. Learn more at GeneSight.com.

Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance

The Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA) is a not-for-profit, 501(c)(3) organization that provides hope, help, support and education to serve the estimated 21 million people throughout the U.S. who live with mood disorders. Programs and resources are offered through our website, dbsalliance.org, and through our 500+ support groups and 150+ chapters across the country. DBSA emphasizes the value of peer support as a crucial resource for wellness. The term peer describes someone who lives with a mood disorder. DBSA believes in the strength and resilience of each person and supports the individual's right to create his/her/their own path to wellness. DBSA also serves caregivers, families and friends of people living with mood disorders because family and social support are central to wellness.

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