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## MAJOR DEPRESSIVE DISORDER

According to The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition (DSM-5), Major Depression (MDD) is a mental disorder marked by depressed mood and loss of interest of pleasure in all activities. It lasts for at least two weeks and represents a change from previous functioning.

Major depression affects 1 - 5% of the general elderly population, but often goes undiagnosed. Major depression in older adults is estimated to occur in one quarter of those with other chronic conditions such as cancer, stroke, chronic lung disease, cardiovascular disease, chronic pain syndrome, and arthritis.

Major depression is associated with an increased risk of cardiac disease, alcohol or substance abuse, relationship difficulties, and can complicate treatment of other illnesses. Only 10% of seniors receive treatment. When left untreated, major depression leads to a decrease in quality of life, functional status and an increase in overall suffering.

Diagnosing major depression in seniors is difficult because they often present differently, and symptoms are attributed to other illness or side effects from medication. Seniors may also be reluctant to discuss their feelings and suffer in isolation.




**ICD 10-CM CLASSIFIES MAJOR DEPRESSION BY EPISODES AND TYPES SUCH AS SEVERITY. WHILE DOCUMENTING MAJOR DEPRESSION, IT IS IMPORTANT TO DOCUMENT THE SEVERITY OF THE CURRENT EPISODE.**

## Documentation

**1. For “gold standard” documentation, consider the details below:**

 **Episode – single (first episode and can resolve) or recurrent (second episode and considered life long and chronic).**

 **Severity – mild, moderate, severe (with or without psychotic features), in remission (partial or full).**

## TIPS

- 1. Screen patients with major depressive disorder on an annual basis using a screening tool to follow the progress of the treatment.**
- 2. Diagnose as active even if patient is asymptomatic, on treatment or refuses treatment.**
- 3. Diagnose "in remission" if patient is asymptomatic.**

**THERE ARE A NUMBER OF EVIDENCE-BASED TOOLS THAT ARE EFFECTIVE IN SCREENING FOR DEPRESSION. THE PHQ-9 (PAGE 3) IS THE MOST COMMONLY USED. IT IS EASY TO USE AND THE PATIENT CAN FILL IT OUT WHILE WAITING TO BE SEEN.**

**Diagnose patient with major depression if:**

- 1. Patient is on an antidepressant for depressed mood**
- 2. Meets criteria by DSM V**
- 3. Scores  $\geq 10$  on a PHQ-9**

**References:**

*Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition (DSM-5).*  
*ICD-10-CM Official Guidelines for Coding and Reporting.*  
[www.uptodate.com](http://www.uptodate.com)

### Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-9)

Over the last 2 weeks, how often have you been bothered by any of the following problems? (Use a "✓" indicate your answer)	None 0	Several Days 1	More than half the Days 2	Nearly Every Day 3
1. Little interest or pleasure in doing things				
2. Feeling down, depressed, or hopeless				
3. Trouble falling or staying asleep, or sleeping too much				
4. Feeling tired or having little energy				
5. Poor appetite or overeating				
6. Feeling bad about yourself - or that you are a failure or have let yourself or your family down				
7. Trouble concentrating on things, such as reading the newspaper or watching television				
8. Moving or speaking so slowly that other people could have noticed? Or the opposite - being so fidgety or restless that you have been moving around a lot more than usual				
9. Thoughts that you would be better off dead or of hurting yourself in some way				
If you checked off any problems, how difficult have these problems made it for you to do your work, take care of things at home, or get along with other people? (Use a "✓")	Not difficult -----	Somewhat Difficult -----	Very Difficult -----	Extremely Difficult -----

Total Score	Depression Severity	Interpreting Score
0 – 4	Minimal depression	May not need treatment.
5 – 9	Mild depression	Use clinical judgment about treatment based on duration of symptoms and functional impairment.
10 – 14	Moderate depression	
15 – 19	Moderately severe depression	Warrants treatment using medication, psychotherapy both.
20 – 27	Severe depression	