

DEPRESSION, BIOCHEMISTRY & THE CHRISTIAN PROV. 31:6-7

What is the relationship to biochemistry to depression? What should the Christian think?

I. There is a biochemical side to depression

What might we have called this in the past? Personality/temperament

This is also consistent with what Scripture teaches about fallen human nature.

The hardware and the software have been defaced, deformed & twisted → we are both sinful and dying!

Medical / biochemical causes to depression seem to be of 2 kinds:

1. Depression caused by a medical condition

Sometimes / most of the time the causal pathway is not known or not clear → but people with certain disease states often suffer from depression.

- Almost any chronic illness
- Almost any end-state disease
- Hyper / hypo-thyroidism
- Parkinson's disease
- Multiple sclerosis
- Epilepsy
- Lupus (what is the problem with this disease?)
- Cushing's disease
- Major surgery → this can bring on an episode

- PMS
- Menopause
- Post-Partum changes

For these 3 → why some women much more than others?

The most important thing to remember: Get a complete, comprehensive physical.

Do not self-diagnose & then self-medicate.

2. Depression caused by a chemical imbalance.

This is commonly diagnosed today. It is also undoubtedly over-diagnosed & misdiagnosed!

However, for a small group the use of modern (post 1988) depression medication takes the edge off, gives them clarity to work on their depression & live life fully.

About 1 in 5 (20%) of people suffering from depression have a medical cause.

Almost all of these are from a medical condition.

Remember: Biochemistry / genetics is only one possible cause & not the major cause at that!

II. The biochemical side is not fully understood.

Several new drugs are prescribed for depression with some success. How they work is not so well-known / well-understood.

Facts about chemical imbalances:

1. There are no tests for a chemical imbalance.

2. The doctor is not talking about specific chemicals.

3. The doctor prescribes the depression medication & if it works → you have a chemical imbalance!

This doesn't mean there isn't a chemical imbalance → just that we shouldn't just do drugs and forget the other factors.

There is also the "chicken & the egg" problem!

Good news about modern anti-depressants:

- They are not highly addictive.
- They are relatively safe → especially when compared to the older anti-depressants.
- They have few, if any, complications/side effects.
- They are helpful in severe depression.
- They do not depend on anybody else.

Bad news about modern anti-depressants:

- There is a much higher rate of relapse when only using drugs.
- There can be some unpleasant side effects.
- 50-60% chance initial drug will not help at all
- Significant risk for pregnant women
- Drugs tend to reinforce the medical/disease model → making you passive & a victim.

Drugs are aids when used cautiously & sensibly.

III. There are false biochemical causes

Lamentations 2:14 Thy prophets have seen vain and foolish things for thee: and they have not discovered thine iniquity, to turn away thy captivity; but have seen for thee **false burdens** and **causes** of banishment.

1. Hypoglycemia**Symptoms:**

➤ Tired all the time	➤ In pain, achy
➤ No energy	➤ Don't / can't get out of bed

Treatment:**2. CFS****Symptoms:**

➤ Tired all the time	➤ In pain, achy
➤ No energy	➤ Don't / can't get out of bed

Treatment:**3. Fibromyalgia****Symptoms:**

➤ Tired all the time	➤ In pain, achy
➤ No energy	➤ Don't / can't get out of bed

Treatment:

Recommendation: Go to a really good clinic & get a real, complete check-up. If it is a real medical condition do not allow the doctor to treat you for depression.

If it is not a medical condition → get some real help. Don't treat as a medical condition.

IV. The Biochemical side is not sufficient!

1 Timothy 4:8 For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.

Proverbs 31:6-7 Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine unto those that be of heavy hearts. Let him drink, and forget his poverty, and remember his misery no more.

Proverbs 4:23 Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it *are* the issues of life.

Some want to treat only the brain → give them a pill.

Some want to treat only the mind → get them involved in therapy.

A Christian would treat both and the soul !!!

We would recognize the body is a unity with several parts & all must be looked at!