

Identification and Treatment of Major Depressive Disorder (MDD) for Adults

A Selection of Medical Conditions that May Mimic MDD

Workup for medical mimics is based on clinical history, exam and known risk factors to rule out medical causes for patients presenting with depression. Laboratory tests to consider: complete blood count, comprehensive metabolic panel, thyroid-stimulating hormone, and urinalysis.

More Common	Less Common
Alcohol Use Disorder	Acute Intermittent Porphyria
Cushing’s Syndrome	Adrenal Insufficiency
Dementia	Brain Tumor
Medication Side Effects	B12 Deficiency
Parkinson Disease	Folate Deficiency
Thyroid Disorders	Giant Cell Arteritis
Substance Use Disorder	Huntington’s Disease
	Lupus
	Multiple Sclerosis
	Neuro-syphilis
	Pancreatic Carcinoma
	Paraneoplastic Syndromes
	Vitamin D Deficiency*
	Wilson’s Disease

*The role of vitamin D deficiency and depressive disorder remains uncertain.

Medical Mimics*	Examples
Drugs and poisons	Alcohol, β -blockers, steroids, opiates, barbiturates, withdrawal from cocaine and amphetamines, heavy-metal poisoning, cholinesterase inhibitors, cimetidine, chemotherapy agents
Metabolic and endocrine disorders	Hyper- and hypothyroidism, severe anemia, hyperparathyroidism, hypokalemia, hyponatremia, Cushing’s disease, Addison’s disease, uremia, hypopituitarism, porphyria, Wilson’s disease, Wernicke-Korsakoff syndrome
Infectious diseases	Tuberculosis, Epstein-Barr infection, human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection, pneumonia, postinfluenza, tertiary syphilis, encephalitis, postencephalitic states
Neurodegenerative and demyelinating diseases	Alzheimer’s disease, multiple sclerosis, Parkinson’s disease, Huntington’s disease
Other neurologic disorders	Subdural hematoma, normal-pressure hydrocephalus, strokes, other traumatic brain injury, cerebral tumors
Neoplasia	Carcinomatosis, cancers of the pancreas, lung, breast, others
Other disorders	Systemic lupus erythematosus, other collagen vascular disorders, other chronic inflammatory or autoimmune disorders, congestive heart failure

*Privitera MR, Lyness JM. Depression. Practice of Geriatrics. Fourth Edition Edmund H. Duthrie, Paul R Katz and Michael L. Malone. Saunders Elsevier Philadelphia PA 2007.pp345-358