

From the Editor

Contemporary Clinical Challenges of Depression

Nurse practitioners are increasingly called upon to recognize, diagnose, and treat depressive illnesses. In fact, as many as 1 in every 10 patients seen in primary care may suffer from a depressive illness. Despite our growing clinical knowledge about its causes, presentations, and treatments, depression is still one of the most common chronic illnesses in the United States, affecting 19 million Americans each year. In fact, the true incidence may be substantially higher because symptoms are so often unrecognized or undertreated. Untreated symptoms contribute to making depression the leading cause of disability worldwide. In 2000, healthcare expenditure, absenteeism from work, and lost productivity totaled \$83 billion dollars. Fortunately, continuing advances in medication and other therapeutic strategies have enhanced recognition of depressive illness and improved quality of life for patients.



Trying to give the best medical care is a challenge for every specialty. With innovative educational programs, such as *CE-TODAY*, we are able to assist you in keeping up-to-date on current therapeutic approaches and patient education and adherence issues. Playing a vital role in successful treatment, nurse practitioners can assess the signs and symptoms of depression, provide education and emotional support, and provide referrals and follow-up care.

This engaging and interactive series of courses features a clinical discussion with **Valerie A. Hart, EdD, APRN, CS**, and **Nancy Balkon, PhD, ANP-C**, that focuses on various patient presentations and clinical challenges of managing major depression (page 7).

Our feature article on page 17, by Dr. Hart, provides a comprehensive review of therapeutic approaches for patients with or at risk for developing a depressive illness.

Finally, expand your knowledge on current strategies for recognizing and managing the spectrum of depressive illness by reviewing courses located on the companion CD. You can also advance your clinical competency by participating in our *CE-TODAY* Interactive Web Workshop & Teleconference (see back cover for further details).

I trust that you will find the content in this issue of *CE-TODAY for Nurse Practitioners* and the accompanying multimedia CD valuable in helping you screen for, diagnose, and treat depression. The courses are also available on the *CE-TODAY* Web site (www.np.ce-today.com). Our Web site also provides you with information on upcoming issues and live events. As always, we welcome and appreciate your feedback to ensure that *CE-TODAY* remains a trusted and valuable resource in your clinical practice.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Diane Young".

Diane Young, RN
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CE-TODAY™

For Nurse Practitioners

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