

# SWAN UPDATES

*November 2000*

## Negative Moods and Depression

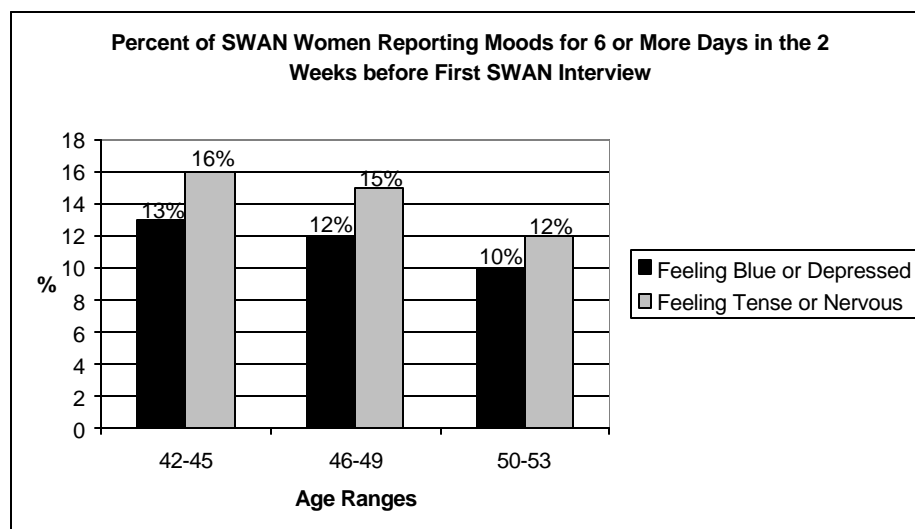
Many of you have asked for more information about emotional changes at mid-life. We would like to share some information from the first SWAN visit about negative moods experienced by women in the SWAN study.

During the first interview, we asked you to tell us how often you experienced a number of different symptoms and moods. Overall, about 15% of the 3302 participants in the SWAN study had negative moods 6 or more days in the 2 weeks before their first SWAN visit. About half of you experienced 1-5 days of at least one negative mood listed in the table below.

### **Percent of SWAN Participants Reporting Negative Moods during the 2 Weeks before their First SWAN Interview**

MOOD	Not at All %	1-5 Days %	6 or More Days %
Feeling Blue or Depressed	39	49	12
Irritability or Grouchiness	28	58	14
Feeling Tense or Nervous	35	50	15
Frequent Mood Changes	49	40	12

When we look at differences in moods between age groups, we find that older women are less likely to report all negative moods. Below is an example of rates of reporting feeling blue or tense.



## Emotional Well-being Study

While negative moods can be distressing, they are different from what is known as clinical or major depression. We have been conducting a study at 3 SWAN sites (Chicago, Newark, and Pittsburgh) since the first year of SWAN. This study is collecting information on mood disturbances such as major depression. On the next page, we present some information on depression and some early findings from this study.

## **Major Depression**

Depression is a common type of mood disturbance with major depression having the biggest effect on everyday functioning. Studies have reported that 10 to 30 percent of women have had a major depressive episode by the time they are in their 40s. To receive a diagnosis of major depression (according to the DSM-IV<sup>™</sup>, a set of national medical diagnostic standards), a person must experience at least two weeks of depressed mood or loss of interest in life or loss of the ability to feel pleasure. In addition to these symptoms, a person must experience at least four of the following: 1) increased or decreased appetite and/or significant weight change 2) being unable to sleep or sleeping too much 3) being fidgety/restless or moving and talking more slowly 4) being very tired 5) feelings of worthlessness or excessive guilt 6) decreased ability to concentrate and/or make decisions 7) thoughts of own death and/or thinking about suicide.

Major depression interferes with a person's ability to perform daily activities at home or work, maintain social relationships, or engage in physical activity. These limitations are similar to those associated with a heart condition, arthritis, or diabetes. People suffering from major depression often consider their health to be poorer, feel more pain, and spend more time in bed than those without major depression.

<b>Percent of SWAN Emotional Well-being Study Participants with a Lifetime History of Major Depression</b>		<b>Percent of Those with a Lifetime History of Major Depression Who Have and Have Not Received Treatment</b>			
(Number)	Lifetime History of Major Depression %	Received No Treatment %	Received Psychotherapy (Counseling) Only %	Received Medications Only %	Received Medications and Psychotherapy %
African American (250)	28	38	28	7	23
Caucasian (516)	35	24	29	7	38
Hispanic (174)	35	38	12	18	27

Depression is a treatable condition, but major depression is often under-recognized and under-treated. However, effective treatments for depression are available. Studies have shown that most people with major depression can be treated successfully with medication (antidepressants), psychotherapy (counseling), or a combination of both. But 24% to 38% of SWAN participants at the three study sites reported receiving no treatment for their major depression. Other studies have found similar percentages of individuals with depression who have not received treatment.

If you think that you may be depressed, contact your health care provider. If you do not have a health care provider, please call your SWAN site for a referral.

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