

Situational Depressive Disorders

by Sophia Tutorial



WHAT'S COVERED

This lesson is going to cover situational depressive disorders by examining:

1. Situational Depressive Disorders
2. Endogenous Depression
3. Postpartum Depression
4. Seasonal Affective Disorder
5. Treatments for Situational Depressive Disorders

1. Situational Depressive Disorders

There are several depressive disorders known as situational depressive disorders. These are a type of mood disorder that usually involves an environmental factor and a biological one. In other words, they have both nature and nurture causes. These disorders will exhibit the same symptoms of depression, like lack of hope or joy, lack of activity, and changes in sleeping patterns. In addition, they last for an extended length of time.

2. Endogenous Depression

Endogenous depression is a form of depression with a very specific genetic component that is related to the brain's ability to produce certain types of neurotransmitters, like serotonin, dopamine, and norepinephrine. When a person has certain genetic or innate problems with developing these kinds of neurotransmitters, it can lead to them experiencing depression throughout their lives.

People are born with this type of disorder; however, it only develops as a result of experiences that are especially traumatic or stressful. This is a good example of the interaction between nature and nurture because there is a biological component influenced by the environment.



TERM TO KNOW

Endogenous Depression

A form of depression with a specific genetic component related to the brain's production of neurotransmitters

3. Postpartum Depression

Another situational dependent depressive disorder is postpartum depression, which is a depression that develops in a woman after giving birth. It is called "baby blues," and only occurs in about 10% of women. This depression can be very severe, with extreme cases resulting in psychosis.

This disorder is caused by the interaction of nature and nurture as well. The environmental cause is the pregnancy, but there are certain changes in the hormonal levels of these women who have a very specific sensitivity to these hormones. Not every woman who has a baby will develop this disorder; however, certain people are biologically predisposed to develop it.



TERM TO KNOW

Postpartum Depression

Depression that develops in a woman after giving birth

4. Seasonal Affective Disorder

Seasonal affective disorder (SAD) is one of the more common types of depression. It's a type of depression where a person experiences mood changes along with the changes in the seasons. This is not a unique disorder within the DSM-IV; rather, it is a symptom of major depressive disorder. Seasonal affective disorder is used to diagnose another type of disorder, but it hasn't necessarily been defined as a mental disorder in its own right.

Outside of the DSM and in the wider medical community, though, it is definitely gaining a lot more ground and recognition. Seasonal affective disorder has a definite evolutionary and biological component to it. People have developed this disorder because, over time and through evolution, they have developed changes in their activities and behaviors during certain parts of the year.

During the winter, a person is a lot less active because it's colder outside, so they tend to do less. There is also definitely a biological component. There is a specific part of the brain, in the hypothalamus, that is light-sensitive, which can actually help in developing treatments for the disorder.



TERM TO KNOW

Seasonal Affective Disorder

A type of depression where a person experiences mood changes along with changes in the seasons, particularly during autumn and winter

5. Treatments for Situational Depressive Disorders

When we talk about treatment, we're also talking about prevention. For those people that might be predisposed to these disorders, treatment involves helping to prevent them from developing depression at all.

Each disorder can be treated preventatively:

- For those predisposed towards endogenous depression, prevention may include helping people reduce stress in their lives.
- Postpartum depression has been particularly linked with weak social support. Prevention can include ensuring that a woman has the support of friends and family.
- Since seasonal affective disorder has a physical cause, physical treatments like light treatment--where a person is exposed to more bright lights--are being tried.



SUMMARY

There are several depressive disorders known as **situational depressive disorders**, which are a type of mood disorder that usually involves an environmental factor and a biological one (nature and nurture). **Endogenous depression** is a disorder that a person is born with, that is triggered by environmental factors like traumatic or stressful events. **Postpartum depression** is another disorder that has both biological and environmental factors. A woman can develop a sensitivity to the hormones that follow pregnancy, causing depression. **Seasonal affective disorder** is a disorder in which people experience depression along with the changes in season. One way of **treating situational depressive disorders** is to enact preventative measures in those predisposed to these disorders.

Good luck!

Source: This work is adapted from Sophia Author Erick Taggart.



TERMS TO KNOW

Endogenous Depression

A form of depression with a specific genetic component related to the brain's production of neurotransmitters.

Postpartum Depression

Depression that develops in a woman after giving birth.

Seasonal Affective Disorder

A type of depression where a person experiences mood changes along with changes in the seasons, particularly during autumn and winter.