

Depression

Depression is a common diagnosis made in primary care, which can vary enormously in severity. Between 1 April 2012 and 31 March 2013, around 160,490 patients consulted a doctor or nurse at least once about depression in Scotland (29 per 1000 patients)¹.

However, estimates for the true level of depression are much higher than this, with 1 in 3 GP appointments being related to a mental health problem (usually anxiety or depression) and about 1 in 8 people in Scotland (12%) taking an antidepressant every day².

Despite its prevalence, diagnosis is difficult, and increasingly it is recognised that depressive symptoms which fall short of criteria required for a formal diagnosis of depression can still be distressing and disabling. The diagnosis of depression can also be difficult in patients who take alcohol or recreational drugs³.

This module will study the diagnosis of depression and its treatment. Both pharmacological and non-pharmacological inputs will be summarised.

This module will not cover anxiety, bereavement, mental illness in children and adolescents and the Mental Health Act as these topics are covered in pre-existing modules. A forthcoming module will study perinatal mental health. The use of anti-depressants for other conditions such as neuropathy, menopausal flushing and premature ejaculation, is not covered in this module.