Spotlight on Winter Depression & SAD

Winter depression — and a severe form called Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) — can cause depressed feelings, loss of interest in activities, and thoughts of suicide. Symptoms begin in late summer and last through spring.

Winter Depression Affects Millions

- Many of the 11 million people who suffer from depression often feel worse in winter months.
- Is it as likely women suffer from winter depression as men?
- People living in areas that are 100 miles farther north are more likely to suffer from SAD.

11,000,000 Americans suffer from SAD.

Symptoms of Winter Depression

- Feelings of hopelessness and worthlessness
- Thoughts of suicide
- Loss of interest in activities
- Withdrawal from social interaction
- Sleep and appetite problems
- Difficulty with concentrating and making decisions
- Decreased sex drive
- Lack of energy
- Agitation

Depression Can Be Hard to Treat

A common treatment is antidepressant medication. Yet, half of major depression patients don’t respond to their first prescribed medication3, resulting in trial-and-error treatments which can last for years.

Now There’s Hope: Finding the Right Medication

- 80% of patients who fail one or more antidepressants are prescribed a genetically sub-optimal medication4.
- A well-validated genetic test called the GeneSight test can help clinicians make personalized drug treatment choices for each patient and achieve better results faster.
- Patients whose treatment was guided by the GeneSight test experienced:
  - 70% greater improvement in depressive symptoms compared to unguided treatment as usual6.

Sources:
1 Yale School of Medicine, “Winter Depression Research Clinic” https://medicine.yale.edu/psychiatry/research/programs/clinical_people/winter.aspx
2 Medline Plus https://medlineplus.gov/depression.html
5 GeneSight https://genesight.com/product/