

Can Family Therapy Help The Depressed Patient?

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A study published in the current issue of *Psychotherapy and Psychosomatics* suggests that single-family and multi-family therapy may benefit hospitalized patients with major depression, and may help the partners of the patients to become aware of the patient's improvement more quickly.

Family-based interventions have been shown to be effective in the treatment of depression, but they have seldom been studied in hospitalized depressed patients.

This study assesses the value of the additional use of single-family or multi-family group therapy within this patient population.

Eighty-three patients were randomly assigned to: (1) the treatment programme as usual ($n = 23$), (2) treatment as usual combined with single-family therapy ($n = 25$) or (3) treatment as usual combined with multi-family group therapy ($n = 35$). Follow-up assessments were made at 3 months and 15 months.

At the end of the study, multi-family group and single-family therapy conditions showed significantly higher rates of treatment responders than the group receiving the usual treatment (49, 24 and 9%, respectively), and higher rates of patients no longer using antidepressant medication (26, 16 and 0%, respectively) at 15 months. Partners taking part in the family treatments were significantly more likely to notice the improvements in the emotional health of the patient early on compared

to those in the treatment as usual condition. This study suggests that single-family and multi-family therapy may benefit hospitalized patients with [major depression](#), and may help the partners of the patients to become aware of the patient's improvement more quickly.

More information: Lemmens, G.M.D.; Eisler, I.; Buysse, A.; Heene, E. ; Demyttenaere, K. The Effects on Mood of Adjunctive Single-Family and Multi-Family Group Therapy in the Treatment of Hospitalized Patients with Major Depression. *Psychother Psychosom* 2009;78:98-105.

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