

national psychology week

3-14 November 2009



www.psychologyweek.com.au

National Psychology Week is an initiative of the Australian Psychological Society

Adolescent Depression Seminar Wednesday 11th November, 1 to 3pm Copland Theatre, University of Melbourne

MEDIA RELEASE

Tuesday 10th November 2009

Australian adolescents more depressed and anxious than ever

Current Australian research suggests that people aged 15 to 24 are more anxious and depressed than ever before, and worry about everything from body image and family breakdown to the prospect of war, according to leading psychologist Dr Michael Carr-Gregg who is chairing a seminar on adolescent depression in Melbourne tomorrow.

Dr Carr-Gregg said that an estimated one in five adolescents experience a diagnosable depressive disorder by age 18, with the illness most common in mid-to-late adolescence. Around 6 per cent of 16 to 24-year-olds (one in 16) have depression and 15 per cent (one in six) have anxiety.

For National Psychology Week, over 400 psychologists and other workers with young people will attend a symposium on Adolescent Depression, convened by the Melbourne Branch of the Australian Psychological Society.

"The emergence of depression during adolescence has been shown to have negative effects on quality of life and physical health into adulthood and old age," Dr Carr-Gregg said.

He said that if depression or other mental disorders are recognised and treated early, this could increase the chances of a better long-term outcome. However, most young people with depression or a common anxiety disorder report delays of five to 15 years before they receive treatment and care.

"Early recognition and help-seeking can only happen if young people and their support network (e.g. family, friends) know about mental disorders, the type of help available, and where to access help," he said.

Common symptoms include:

- **Feelings of helplessness and hopelessness:** A bleak outlook—nothing will ever get better and there's nothing you can do to improve your situation.
- **Loss of interest in daily activities:** No interest in or ability to enjoy former hobbies, pastimes, social activities, or sex.
- **Appetite or weight changes:** Significant weight loss or weight gain—a change of more than 5% of body weight in a month.
- **Sleep changes:** Either insomnia, especially waking in the early hours of the morning, or oversleeping (also known as hypersomnia).
- **Psychomotor agitation or retardation:** Either feeling "keyed up" and restless or sluggish and physically slowed down.
- **Loss of energy:** Feeling fatigued and physically drained. Even small tasks are exhausting or take longer.
- **Self-loathing:** Strong feelings of worthlessness or guilt. Harsh criticism of perceived faults and mistakes.
- **Concentration problems:** Trouble focusing, making decisions, or remembering things.

Where to seek help:

The APS provides a free 'Find a psychologist' referral service for the general public, GPs and other health professionals who are seeking the advice and assistance of a qualified psychologist, online at www.psychology.org.au or call 1800 333 497.

-More-

Other information and resources are available via *headspace* and *beyondblue* online at www.headspace.org.au
www.beyondblue.org.au

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Dr Michael Carr-Gregg is available for interview prior to the symposium.

Media are invited to attend the symposium.

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The APS is the largest professional association for psychologists in Australia, representing more than 17,500 members.

The APS is committed to advancing psychology as a discipline and profession. It spreads the message that psychologists make a difference to peoples' lives, through improving psychological knowledge and community wellbeing.