

*Physical Disabilities  
Through the Lifespan*



# Mental Health Issues

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# *Physical Disabilities Through the Lifespan*



## State of the Field

- The link between depression and disability is well established.
- There is little relationship between the severity of the disease or the degree of impairment and rate of depression.
- Depression is related to the onset and course (even mortality) of certain disabling conditions as well as daily functioning, symptom burden, adherence to treatment, medical care utilization and overall quality of life.



## Problems/Concerns/Issues

- The majority of persons with a disability who are depressed appear to go untreated.
- There is a lack of large-scale safety or treatment efficacy studies in people with disabling conditions.



## Problems/Concerns/Issues

- There are a number of barriers to widespread implementation of effective mental health treatment within the primary healthcare system.
- Fewer studies have investigated co-morbidity of other mental health disorders such as anxiety and substance use with physical disabilities.



## Research Priorities

- Study co-morbidity not isolated relationships
  - Examine how to conceptualize co-morbidity
  - Explore bidirectional synergistic effects
  - Develop cross-Institute funding streams to address co-morbidity issues
- Research interventions
  - Promote evidence-based interventions across disciplinary boundaries
  - Focus on prevention and early intervention
  - Research a range of treatments (e.g., biomedical to community-based, peer services)



## Research Priorities

- Develop knowledge of the mechanisms that link mental disorders with disabilities and vice versa
  - Examine how disabling conditions contribute to mental health disorders
  - Look at how mental disorders contribute to disabling conditions
  - Research protective factors XXX modifications such as self-efficacy, social support, optimism