

*The picture is from the official website of the world health organization
<https://www.fondationdharcourt.org/i-had-a-black-dog-his-name-was-depression/>*

“The invisible mind assassin”

The current situation of depression among Chinese high school students.

Social responsibility

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Introduction

Depression is a mood disorder that causes a persistent feeling of sadness and loss of interest. Also called major depressive disorder or clinical depression, it affects how people feel, think and behave and can lead to a variety of emotional and physical problems. This mental disease may cause the sufferers having trouble of doing normal day-to-day activities, and sometimes even make them feel as if life is not worth living.

According to the World Health Organization, depression is currently the fourth-largest disease burden in the world and one of the leading causes of functional disability in patients. About one in seven people suffer from depression at some stage in their lives in China. It is expected that by 2020, depression will become the second largest disease after cardiovascular disease; by 2030, depression will become the number one disease burden in China¹.

Wu Xiangdong, deputy of the National People's Congress and chairman of Huaze Group, said that “the number of Chinese patients with depression is as high as 70 million. It is conservatively estimated that about 200 million people need professional psychological counseling or psychotherapy in their lifetime.” Highly disabling diseases and depression have become a major public health problem in China².

The population of depression sufferers is getting younger

Talking about depression, people normally think the majority sufferers are adults, while with more and more teenagers and young people suffering depression and overstress, this becomes an alarming situation especially to the parents.

A questionnaire has been conducted and it illustrates people’s understanding of depression. Based on the survey conducted, nearly 50 percent of people agree that depression is an adult illness, but in fact, young people also make up a large proportion of depressed people.

Teenagers are among the best age during the life period, they are supposed to be naïve, innocent and happy, so the issue of adolescent suffering depression may seem neglected. However adolescent depression has already become a serious issue. According to the report of China-daily, a survey of 7,500 students in the four countries (China, United States, Japan and Republic of Korea) was conducted in September and October of 2009 by the China Youth and Children Research Center and corresponding organizations abroad. This survey found that more than 86 percent of Chinese senior high students felt under high stress, compared with 69 percent in Japan, 74.8 percent in the Republic of Korea and 61.7 percent in the United States.³

That is to say, China's senior high school students suffer a far greater rate of high or comparatively high stress than students in other three countries.

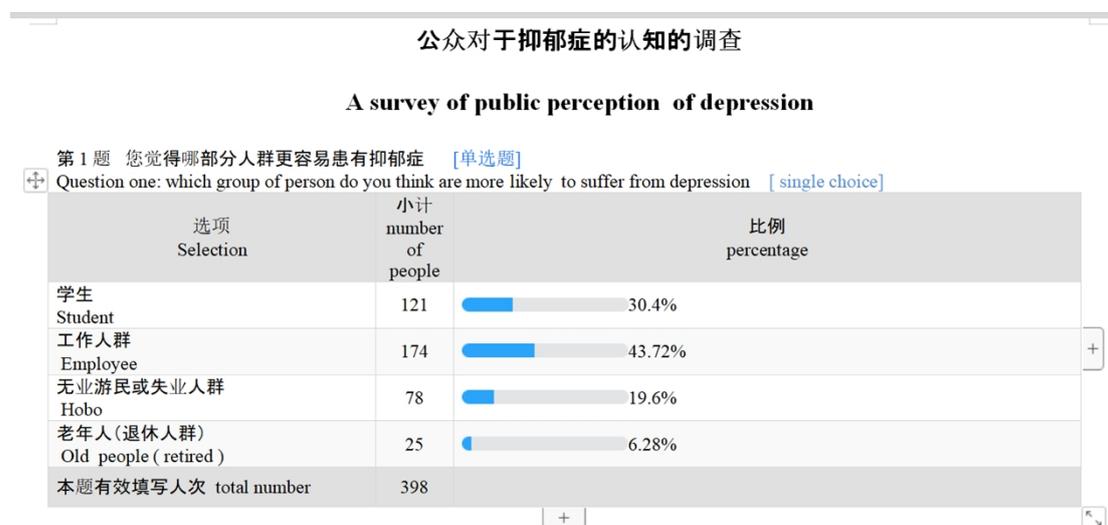
According to the latest statistics, the total of Chinese depressed patients has more than one hundred million people, and the number of teenagers patients with depression under the age of 17 is as high as 30 million, and depression has become the leading

¹ <https://www.jianke.com/xwpd/3134156.html>

² http://www.sohu.com/a/197200751_485575

³ http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2010-04/10/content_9710997.htm

cause of suicide among people at the age of 15-34⁴.



Interviews

In order to get the situation clear, several interviews have been done among high school students who had suffered depression or are suffering depression, the following paragraphs mainly talking about the details of the interview.

Jacky Wang is a student studying in an international high school, he has been suffering depression since he was 11 years old. During the past 8 years, depression had driven him crazy many times and self-mutilation is a common thing to him. He even tried to suicide several times. When he was 11 years old, a terrible thing happened to him, this hurt him deeply and influenced him very much. He refuses to talk about the details, but it truly changed him dramatically.

“I felt that my life suddenly changed and it is totally different from then on and no long the same like before. For quite a long time, I do not want to see anyone or talk anymore. When something make me upset, I normally turn out to be losing my mind, then I start to punish myself with knife or my fist, even though most of the time it is not my fault.” He said.

He had even been to ICU once because of suicide. “During the first year of high school, because I was far away from home for the first time, I was very weak and nervous, particularly when I met difficulties. One time I was so silly and wanted to kill myself, so I cut my arm with a knife, the wound was about 7 centimeter long and it got me into ICU because of excessive bleeding. At that time, I was keen to taste the feeling of death.”

⁴ https://m.sohu.com/a/199886932_100928/?pvid=000115_3w_a

Luckily, after staying one day in ICU, Jacky Wang was saved. Until then, his parents realized his problem and started to pay more attention to him. “I feel much better now, my parents take care of me like never before, they were so busy with their work before and they hardly paid attention to my life, I think that is one of the reasons why I got into depression for such a long time.” Jacky Wang said.

However, even his parents take good care of Jacky Wang, they are still far away from fully understanding their son’s situation. As Jacky Wang said, “If the total of my depression and self-mutilation is 100%, then my parents may just know about 5%.”

The second interviewer, Jane, she is studying in a key high school in Dalian. She used to be a great student, but when she becomes a senior high school student, she gets into trouble with her academic performance.

“At first I thought it was just because of the new level in high school and I need time to adapt it, but after a few tests and quiz, I felt frustrated and overstress because of low score. I started to doubt whether it is a good choice to choose this school. I often feel self-abasement, I thought everyone is better than me, and I am the worst student in the school. I became extremely introvert, I don’t want to communicate or make friends with others because I thought they will not accept me because of my low mark. At that time one thing I deeply believe is, low mark means a bad student.” Jane said.

Unfortunately, though Jane works very hard on her study, her bad condition still pulls her down. “No matter how hard I tried, I still cannot satisfy with my performance, I was frustrated and I even thought I have no capability to study.” Jane said.

Finally, the bad condition and emotion made Jane feel overstress, she has insomnia and loss weight. “I cannot sleep well at night, I am in a worrying situation all the time, I start to feel afraid of going to school, I start to worry tomorrow.”

A few months later, Jane’s teacher noticed her bad situation, after having some talks with her and her parents, they suggested that Jane should have suspension of schooling. “After half year of rest, I feel much better now, though I am still a little bit worry about going to school, but I believe I have enough courage to face my problems, I believe I am almost recovery and will become great again.” Jane said.

The last person is Bob, a student studying in an international high school. He is also a member of our band team. He used to suffer from depression as well when he was first year of high school, the type of the depressive he had is called sunlight depression. At that time, he had a bad time on social behavior. He had several arguments with his classmates and also broke up with his girlfriend and got some really bad rumors. So he was isolated and push aside by his friends and classmates. “I nearly lose all my friends in school” Bob said.

Because of the bad experience in school, his performance was influenced as well. “When I saw my report card at the end of the semester, I felt really sorry for myself and my parents, so I felt even more stress. With the depression, I was sick. When I finally realize I was sick, it was too late. I fell into a negative circulation. I stay up late every night, midnight become my favorite time, because I think at midnight most of the people was asleep, no matter where I go in the campus there will be only darkness and quiet, and I don’t have to pretend I am really strong, don’t have to pretend I don’t care about others comment. I was not insomnia during that time because every time when I go to bed, it was already late in the midnight or even early in the morning, my body and mind was exhausted and fell asleep very fast. The more night I stay up late the worse my condition was, my depression did not reduce but getting worse.”

Gradually stay up late cannot satisfy him anymore, so he started to self-mutilation.

“Once I start it, I cannot stop it. At first I just used paper knife to make some small cut and the scar will disappear in a few days, the more I self-mutilation, the bigger the scar was, finally it became permanent scar and it can still be found on my right arm. I still remember the feeling after I cut myself, when I saw the blood flowing out from the wound, I felt extremely relax and calm but not pain, I felt all of my stress and bad emotion were released from these wounds.”

Fortunately, his parents notice his bad condition and his wounds, after a series of therapy he got recovered. “Although I am still more easily to fall into negative emotion than others but at least I don’t self-mutilation and stay up late anymore. I just cannot imagine what I would be like without the help from my mother and hospital.” Bob said.

There are still many stories that we do not put in this paper, not because their stories are not shock enough, but because we do not have the space to share everyone’s story.

Depression is a serious threat to both physical and mental health of teenager, because teenagers cannot deal with their emotions and psychological changes very well, so when they are in bad moods, sometimes they cannot release this negative emotions, when more and more negative emotions store, teenager may easily feel over stress and lose themselves in depression, some may take ill behavior or even suicide. Base on the latest research of Ministry of Public Health of China, lifetime prevalence of depression people is more than 3% and the lifetime disability rate of depression people is more than 47%, also people with depression will loss more than six years of healthy life⁵.

Actually, depression is not that horrible, though more than three hundred million people are suffering it in the world⁶. Though more than one million people died

⁵ http://www.sohu.com/a/153048402_508456

⁶ <http://news.e23.cn/shehui/2017-02-25/2017022500256.html>

because of it⁷, but it has a really high cure rate in United State and some western country, because people there paid enough attention on the disease, they began to study the disease early and tried many kinds of way to cure it. Moreover, people are educated about it, they often consult psychologist and take psychological tests, even though many people suffer from depression, most of them can be detected early and treated accordingly. But in China the situation is different, the research on psychology in China is far less profound than that in western countries, and the popularization and understanding of depression are not comprehensive as western countries as well, so the resource in China is very limited, many patients can only be treated with drugs rather than opting for less harmful and more effective treatment. In China, not only students, but also many adults do not know about depression at all.

Also because of culture difference and incomplete popularization, many people will feel shame about this kind of disease, even though they might find out there is something wrong with their states, they will still refuse to go to a mental hospital and tell their situation with doctor, in many Chinese people's mind, go to a mental hospital and see a psychologist means they are crazy, and that makes China's depression cure rate become very low and lead to many people died.

Conclusion

A lot of teenagers who are suffering depression right now, more worse, many of them cannot recognize the different between negative emotion and depression, and let it run its course. China still did not pay enough attention on teenagers psychological states, every young people should have a happy life, but now some of them are suffering in pain, they also deserve a happier life. People simply believe that young people will not have much psychology pressure, young people's psychology is always naive and happy, and that led to the death of many young lives, if people can pay enough attention on them, if people face the problem seriously, the loss of young lives because of suicide will be reduce, these youth will be save and they will enjoy their lives happier.

⁷ <http://gd.sina.com.cn/qy/news/2015-04-06/092317126.html>