

health

Older people are denied help for depression, says charity

By Daily Mail Reporter

Last updated at 1:33 AM on 12th August 2008

Older people with depression are being denied help because of their age, a report says today.

They are often fobbed off, misdiagnosed or given inappropriate treatment, according to the study by Age Concern.

Doctors may prescribe drugs like Prozac when counselling would offer more benefit.



Depression: Old people are not getting the help they need according to the report by Age Concern

The numbers given psychological help are far lower than in the general population.

Age Concern says more than two million people over 65 in England have symptoms of depression.

Overall, eight out of 10 older people with clinical depression do not get any treatment, the report said.


It has launched a campaign - Down but Not Out - to improve their lives. It says losing a loved one, money worries and events like moving into a care home can all trigger depression.

Gordon Lishman, director general of Age Concern, said: "Negative attitudes about mental health problems make it very difficult for older people to talk about their feelings or to ask for help.

"It is scandalous that hundreds of thousands of older people may be denied treatment because depression is wrongly seen as a natural part of getting older.

"Older people deserve better treatment - there should be no excuse for inaction.

"Without a major change in policy and practice, there will be 3.5 million older people in UK with symptoms of depression by 2021."

Associated Northcliffe Digital

Part of the Daily Mail, The Mail on Sunday, Evening Standard & Metro Media Group

© 2008 Associated Newspapers Ltd