THE DEPRESSED PATIENT
M2 ICE SMALL GROUP
SP SCENARIO

The Patient
Updated; 2-16-12

Primary educational goals of the patient:
Portray a depressed patient who doesn’t want to admit they are depressed.

Additional goals for students:
1. To improve the students’ knowledge, regarding diagnosis of depression in the elderly.
2. To improve the students’ knowledge of social problems predisposing and complicating depression.
3. To improve the students’ skills in taking history and diagnosing depression in the elderly.
4. To clarify the students’ attitudes regarding depression in the elderly and the use of collateral sources in history taking.

Objectives for students:
After completion of this endeavor, the student will be better able to:

1. Define depression.
2. Elicit the appropriate historical elements to diagnoses and treat depression in the elderly.
3. List the medications at risk to cause depression in the elderly.
4. List the appropriate exam elements to perform in evaluation of depression in the elderly.
5. List the unique symptoms of depression in the elderly.
6. Use collateral source historians effectively to obtain information.
7. List nonpharmacologic and pharmacologic treatments of depression in the elderly.

Chief complaint: You are a 70-80 year old widowed male or female who is melancholically depressed but who really only claims physical problems (fatigue, lack of sleep, and reduced appetite). You don’t really want to be in the doctor’s office, but your sibling/child talked you into going. You see emotional problems as a sign of weakness so you are not ready to admit you are depressed. All you want is to get more energy and fix the fatigue. You answer questions specifically asked, but offer little extra information, as you assume the physician will just know what to do (“just put me in a CAT scanner and figure it out”). You just want a pill to fix you up and send you home.

Personality: Controlling, intellectual, very cerebral
**Sex:** Male or female

**Relationship with collateral source:** You are the elder and the dominant one. You have always been in charge and still are. You may be parent of the collateral source or an older sibling. The collateral source lives with you. The dwelling belongs to you. (Be sure to coordinate ages, names, etc. with the SP who is playing your child/sibling.)

**History items:**
- **Medical problems:**
  - Heart attack 5 years ago, no problems since
  - High blood pressure for past 20 years

- **Medications:** (Blood pressure medicine)
  - Clonidine 0.1 mg per day

- **Surgery:**
  - Gallbladder out 30 years ago
  - Breast (females) biopsy (left) 20 years ago; it was negative, no further treatment was recommended

- **Social history:**
  - You have been widowed since 2 years ago
  - Non-smoker
  - Occasional glass of wine
  - College educated
  - Former college English professor or high school English teacher (you choose)
  - In past five plus years, several friends also have become disabled or died (stroke, Alzheimer’s, severe arthritis, cancer, etc.)

- **Family history:**
  - Father: deceased (90), strokes, senility
  - Mother: deceased (81), pancreatic cancer
  - Three siblings: two deceased from heart attacks and one died with colon cancer

- **Health care (females):**
  - Mammogram 5 years ago (normal)
  - Pap smear age 65 years (negative)

- **Allergies:** None
Specific replies to questions if asked:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symptom</th>
<th>Patient’s reply</th>
<th>Collateral source’s reply (reality)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mood</td>
<td>“I’m fine.”</td>
<td>“Very depressed since her/his husband/wife died.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sleep</td>
<td>“I don’t sleep as well as I used to.”</td>
<td>“I don’t know about night time for sure, but she/he naps a lot during the day.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Life Interests:</td>
<td>“I just can’t do the things I used to do. I can’t see to read. I am too tired to go out. TV shows are terrible.”</td>
<td>“He/She doesn’t want to do anything, just sits at home, and won’t come to family functions when invited.”</td>
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<td>Guilt/Worthlessness</td>
<td>“I’m over the hill.”</td>
<td>“Just wants to die; feels she/he has nothing to live for.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Energy</td>
<td>“I am just tired all the time, I am getting old; my heart is weak.”</td>
<td>“Complains of being tired all the time.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Concentration</td>
<td>“Concentration is less because I don’t want to concentrate.” “Everyone forgets things now and then.”</td>
<td>“He/She seems to be forgetful.” (For example, forgets where puts things, forgets birthdays/holidays, etc. One incident of leaving a burner on the stove.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Appetite</td>
<td>“My appetite is fine. If you don’t do anything why should you eat; you young people eat too much.”</td>
<td>“She/He won’t eat anything. She/He tells me my cooking doesn’t taste good or doesn’t like what I fix. She/He has lost 10 lbs. over 6 months.”</td>
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<td>Psychomotor Activity</td>
<td>“There is nothing to do that I can do, so I sleep during the day. My spouse and friends are all gone. I’m old; what’s there to do?”</td>
<td>“Very lethargic and irritable”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Suicidal</td>
<td>“I would never hurt myself, but I have nothing to live for and I just wish I could be with my wife/husband.”</td>
<td>“Has never said she/he would hurt her/himself but remarks all the time she/he has nothing to live for and she/he wishes she/he could be with his/her wife/husband.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Facilitator will give results of physical exam.
**Special instructions:**

You and the collateral source (CS) come to the doctor’s office together, but you will be the main person speaking. However, your sibling/parent will be giving non-verbal cues about disagreeing with your story, which should trigger the students to ask for collateral source information. Students will need to negotiate with you to talk to your child/sibling—either in the same interview together, or speak to them separately. You can initially ask why, don’t they believe you?, etc., but ultimately you do agree. Do not take forever to get to this point. This will allow the students to get the differing information, which is a learning objective for this session.
CHART NOTE

Name: ________________________________ Age: ______

Vitals: BP 120/80 RR 16 T 98.8 P 66

Allergies: None

CC: “Tired all the time, can’t sleep at night”