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### ASSESSING MEDICAL STUDENTS KNOWLEDGE IN DIAGNOSIS AND INITIAL TREATMENT OF DEPRESSION

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Depression is one of the leading causes of premature death in the geriatric population, and one of the highest burdens of overall disability. Depression rates are around 13% in primary care settings.

Depressive episodes are still underdiagnosed and undertreated, in the primary care settings. Several factors contribute to this, including lack of detailed knowledge, lack of confidence in treatments, etc. Improving knowledge and confidence in diagnosing depression types in order to improve either treatment or referring patients to psychiatric care would help address this gap, and improve patients' care and quality of life.

Moreover, bipolar depression can be difficult to distinguish from unipolar. Delays in recognition and referral can lead to further worsening of the disease. Bipolar depression is treated differently than unipolar depression. Improving education of future physicians in the formative years in these areas would consequently impact and improve care for patients.

**Aims:** 1) To assess student's level of confidence and knowledge in diagnosing and treating depression before and after a psychiatry clerkship, and any barriers to gaps in knowledge

2) To assess students' knowledge in differentiating unipolar versus bipolar depression and any barriers to gaps in knowledge.

We are assessing these by an online survey on a website used by Medical College of Georgia for student questionnaires, which is sent to all third year medical students after internal medicine rotation. The survey will be sent through the academic affairs office and students will be notified by email of the availability of the survey if they wish to participate.

#### Biography

Mark Yassa is a Pre-Medical student at Augusta University, GA. He majors in Medicinal Chemistry in his senior year. His research interests include Clinical Psychiatry and treatment resistant psychiatric disorders. He is a Research Assistant for Dr. Nagy Youssef at the Department of Psychiatry at the Medical College of Georgia. He assists in several studies and in the recently submitted paper entitled "Low Amplitude Seizure Therapy: Proof of Concept study in Humans" as well as in the recently published paper "Racial/Ethnic Differences in the Association of Childhood Adversities with Depression and the Role of Resilience." *Journal of Affective Disorders.*"

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