

# Understanding the Link Between Depression and Mold

Living and working in Tampa, Florida, as we do, we witness on a weekly basis at least one patient who displays signs of mold sickness and depression. We can put much of the blame for this malady on water-damaged buildings, which are found in abundance in our humid, damp, tropical southern climate.



Because of these climate-specific surroundings, we almost always ask our patients about their living and working environment, because we are strong believers in the notion that there is a direct link between water-damaged buildings that can cause mold sickness and associated depression.

## ***Mold-related Signs of Depression***

Some signs of depression – no matter the cause – often include the following:

- Foggy memory, difficulty in concentrating, difficulty making decisions
- Constant fatigue, a lack of energy, lackluster behavior
- Helplessness, hopelessness, loss of optimism
- Feelings of hopelessness and/or pessimism
- Signs of irritability and restlessness
- Lack of interest in normal activities or events
- Unexplainable pains, headaches, cramps or stomach issues
- Thinking or attempting suicide

When we explore the symptoms associated with Chronic Inflammatory Response Syndrome (CIRS) as it pertains to water-damaged buildings, we find similar symptoms, including fatigue, pain, memory issues, lack of concentration, confusion, disorientation, and mood swings.

And while we certainly want to point out that *correlation does not imply causation*, we've discovered solid evidence of the link between a patient suffering from depression and a patient showing evidence of exposure to mold.

### ***Medical Studies Show Depression Tied to Mold***

[An article published in the American Journal of Public Health](#) cites a World Health Organization research project that involved an inspection of 3,000 homes in Europe. In households where mold was present, the researchers concluded that biotoxins in the mold offered a greater likelihood for depression. The most common symptoms? Brain fog, fatigue and loss of concentration, which is what we have seen in clinical cases here at BioDesign Wellness Center.

In another study – this one released by the [National Center for Biotechnology Information](#) – a review of 100 patients exposed to mold showed 70 percent suffering neurological damage, including short-term memory loss, concentration and balance issues –

symptoms we also see on a weekly basis at our [Tampa Functional Medicine clinic](#). Sixty-four percent of those same study participants also displayed more traditional mold symptoms such as congestion, respiratory issues and allergies.

Many physicians go no further than a 10-minute interview to determine the cause of depression among their patients, and an inquiry into their home environment is seldom sought. What we know at BioDesign is that the brain can be impacted by biotoxin exposure within a water-damaged building. By performing a Neuroquant brain MRI study or volume analysis of brain structures, we often discover atrophy or loss of tissue in the grey matter nuclei of the brain. This confirms brain involvement in CIRS or mold exposure cases.

### ***BioDesign RX: Run a Test – Don't Guess***

Here at BioDesign Wellness Center, we have tests that can confirm or rule out Chronic Inflammatory Response Syndrome as a result of a water-damaged structure. One such test is called HLA DR, and it determines whether our patient is susceptible to CIRS, meaning he or she often has an immune system that not only doesn't recognize biotoxins, but can't remove them from the body.

And we don't rely 100 percent on the HLA DR test alone. In fact, before we initiate a test, we spend more than three hours with you, asking questions and then listening to the answers. We want to rule out anything else that might be causing the depression. In addition, we review tests from previous doctors, and then perform our own CIRS-WDB lab work.

What exactly is it that we're looking for? We want to know if our patients are among the 25 percent who are vulnerable to exposure to a water-damaged building – something you're not going to find on a generic 23andMe profile. And we want to see

if there is reduced oxygen in the brain by means of VCS (*Visual Contrast Sensitivity*) testing, as well as – through functional respiratory testing – confirm changes in the lungs due to possible inflammation. Such inflammation can quickly be identified and used as a baseline before, during, and after treatment.

Subsequent tests target nasal cultures, blood work and brain MRIs, among others, and all of this is followed by an extensive review by our doctors, who will confirm the diagnosis and prescribe a treatment program. The BioDesign Discovery process can give you concrete answers to your questions about fatigue, brain fog, and even depression.

And we're here to not only listen to your concerns, but to provide answers. All we ask is that you give us time to present you with a proper diagnosis. If you think mold may be present in your home or work environment, and you're having a difficult time with depression, please consider sharing the information presented above with your doctor. Or, if you feel we can help, contact our Patient Care Coordinator, Lori Corica, by calling (813) 445-7770.

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