Depression in the workplace in South Africa

Workplace depression is a major issue across different cultures and economies, with devastating consequences. Lifetime prevalence of depression in South Africa: 9.7% or 4.5 million1,2


Depression costs South Africa more than US$17 billion in lost productivity (absence from work, and attending work while unwell)1

Over x1.5 higher than the total South African budget for social protection2

$17b
Lost Productivity

$9.8b
South African Social Protection Budget


For more information on the IDEA Survey as well as the LSE Health and Social Care research centre, visit the centre’s blog: http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/healthandsocialcare/
The report was initiated by, and is sponsored by H. Lundbeck A/S. The opinions expressed by the report author from the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) do not necessarily represent the opinions of H. Lundbeck A/S
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Depression-related presenteeism costs South Africa US$14.8 billion

(*attending work while unwell)

More than the total value of South Africa’s tourism industry

Presenteeism: US$14.8b
Absenteeism: US$2.2b
Value of South African tourist industry US$12b

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The cognitive symptoms of depression, for instance difficulties in concentrating, making decisions and remembering, are present up to 94% of the time during an episode of depression1, causing significant impairment in work function and productivity2


Cognitive symptoms are a crucial factor affecting workplace performance in people with depression


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Almost 40% of South African employees are highly educated employees with depression are likely to...

- **Work in a highly demanding job and therefore be severely impacted by the cognitive symptoms of depression**
- **Manage others so the impact of their depression has wider consequences**


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South African employees are likely to keep working during an episode of depression, impacting their productivity and performance at work

Days taken off work during an episode of depression

- 0 days = 49%
- 1–5 days = 20.5%
- 6–10 days = 9.0%
- 11–15 days = 7.6%
- 16–20 days = 6%
- 21+ days = 5.9%
- Don’t know = 7.9%


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