Depression is one of the most common disorders. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), depression is affecting almost 350 million of people in the world. It has been postulated that by the year 2020, depression is the second most disabling disease. The most common cause of suicide is depression. However, depression is frequently undetected and untreated. Similarly, depression is still far behind being researched. Cancer which is known to cause loss of life, has been given the highest funding either in research or health promotion & prevention or treatment unlike depression1.

In Malaysia, similar scenario is happening. Research in depression is still lacking. The National Morbidity Survey in 2011 reported the prevalence of depressive disorder as 1.8%. This figure is low as compared to the prevalence of depression reported in the developed countries. The difference may be explained by the culturally sensitive issues related to each ethnic which may have defined depression differently2. The depression screening scales needed to be translated and validated to the main languages used. The common assessment tools used in Malaysia were Beck Depression Inventory (BDI), Depression, Anxiety and Stress Scale (DASS), Patient Health Questionnaire 9 (PHQ-9) and Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale (HADS)3.

We need more research in depression and out-put to be published. Focus on both gender is needed even though many researchers reported that women and men showed different rates of mental illness4. Currently there is still lack of study on depression in men3. There is possibility that men expressed depression differently and cope in a different way compared to the women. This needs further research.

References

1. Ledford H. Medical research: if depression were cancer. Nature 2014; 515: 182-184


