

Feeling blue? Depression may have offered evolutionary advantage to our ancestors

Depressive symptoms have been found in every culture on Earth and throughout history...Unlike other psychiatric disorders, which are rare, depression is fairly common.

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We think of depression as an obstacle to good health and in extreme cases, even survival. But what if at one time, it actually gave one an evolutionary advantage?

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[S]cientists posit that depression is a neurological process that helps the person avoid distractions, in order to concentrate on a difficult problem. Evolutionary psychologist Paul Andrews posits this [“analytical rumination hypothesis,”](#) which states that by promoting a period of rumination, one can come up with a solution and therefore, increase their chances of survival.

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Another theory is that major depression is an immune response. Those genes which beef up our immune system to fight off infection also increase our risk of depression, according to Andrew Miller, MD of Emory University...The symptoms we associate with depression including fatigue...and social withdrawal.

These would have kept a contagion away from the social group, helping to contain the infection. The person also conserves energy, which could be used to aid an immune response.

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion, and analysis. Read full, original post: [Researchers Believe Depression Once Offered Humans an Evolutionary Advantage](#)