

Long-Term Care Survey Alert

Clinical Developments: CHRONIC MILD DEPRESSION HARD ON OLDER ADULTS IMMUNITY

Nursing facilities now have another reason to screen and treat elderly residents for depression. Even mild chronic depression may impair older adults' ability to ward off infections and cancers, according to a new study.

In an 18-month prospective study of 78 older adults, the researchers found that even subclinical forms of chronic mild depression knock down the body's ability to fight off an infectious agent. The length of the depression - rather than its severity - seemed the key factor leading to the decreased immunity.

The study is reported in the February 2002 issue of the Journal of Abnormal Psychology.

Editor's Note: Consultant **Deborah Ohl's** location was noted incorrectly in last month's issue. Ohl's firm, **Ohl & Associates** (tel. 513-522-6041), is based in Cincinnati, OH.