

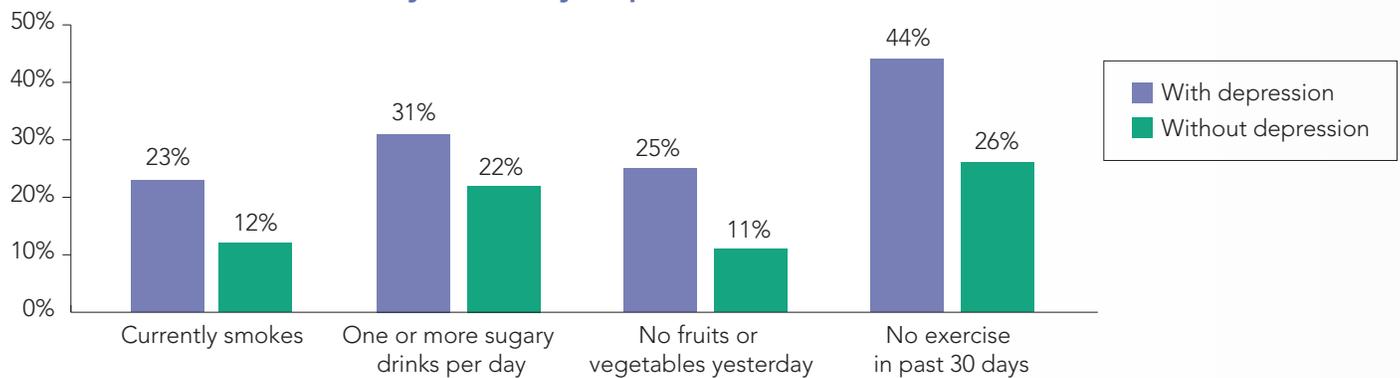
MANAGING DEPRESSION AND CHRONIC DISEASE IN PRIMARY CARE:

Strategies for Identifying Depression and Improving Care

The challenge: Understanding the relationship between mental and physical health, and addressing it in primary care.

While primary care providers may treat mental and physical health conditions separately, research suggests that they are connected. In New York City, adults with a chronic disease are two to three times more likely to report being depressed compared to adults without a chronic disease. Adults with depression are also more likely to engage in behaviors that contribute to chronic disease.¹

Prevalence of Health Behaviors Among New York City Adults by Depression Status, 2016



For patients who can't or don't have access to mental health services, primary care providers can help identify mental health conditions, such as depression.^{2,3} More research about the relationship between chronic disease and depression is needed. However, as a primary care provider, you can improve clinical care by treating patients' mental health and coordinating care to behavioral health services through your practice.

What can you do?

Routinely screen for depression in primary care practices, and offer treatment to help patients improve how they manage depression and chronic disease. Remember to:

- Recognize that patients living with a chronic disease might be at a higher risk for developing depression.
- Screen patients, including those with depression and other mental health conditions, for chronic diseases using age- and risk-factor-based guidelines.
- Use the PHQ-9 to identify signs and symptoms for depression among patients with chronic disease conditions, such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease and cancer.
- Work with patients on self-management strategies that align with both depression and chronic disease management, such as eating healthy, being physically active and connecting with positive support systems.
- Know what resources are available to help your patients manage their chronic disease. Refer to the Addressing Your Patients' Social Needs for Better Mental Health Fact Sheet.

¹ Tuskeviciute R, Hoening J, Norman C. Depression among New York City Adults. *NYC Vital Signs* 2018, 17(2); 1-4.

² Katon WJ. Epidemiology and treatment of depression in patients with chronic medical illness. *Dialogues Clin Neurosci*. 2011;13(1):7-23.

³ Benton T, Staab J, Evans DL. Medical co-morbidity in depressive disorders. *Ann Clin Psychiatry*. 2007;19(4):289-303.