

# About Psychotic Depression

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This is a very disturbing condition – people describe feeling black and empty, unable to think or feel. Suicidal thinking is related to the profound feeling of despair and feeling of self-punishment.

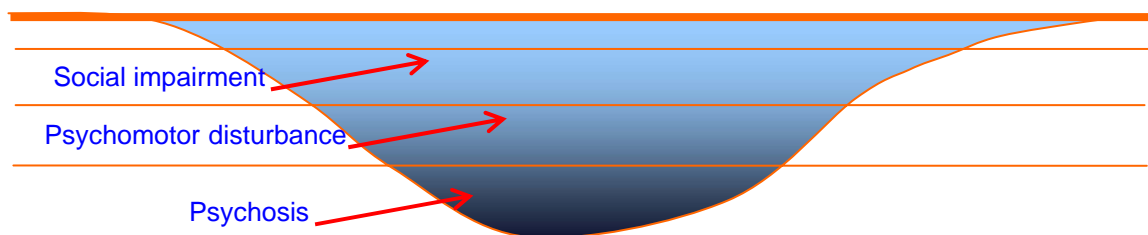
## Symptoms of Psychotic Depression

Symptoms of psychotic depression can be summarized as:

- *Observable* severe depressed mood
- Severe social impairment
- Severe psychomotor disturbance (agitation, retardation, cognitive processing problems)
- Psychotic features such as: delusions, hallucinations.



If a patient is very agitated, assume psychosis. Those with psychotic depression usually don't recover on an antidepressant alone.



## Diagnosis of Psychotic Depression

|                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| Psychotic features:      | Consistent with mood (mood congruent) or mood incongruent.<br>Delusions more common than hallucinations – 90% vs 10% |
| Pathological guilt:      | Common in psychotic depression   |
| Psychomotor disturbance: | Profound   |
| Cognitive function:      | Mild cognitive processing problems through to pseudo-dementia  |

## Useful Questions

Some additional useful questions which can help to determine if a patient is suffering from psychotic depression include:

- Are you a good person? Do you feel guilty? Do you deserve to feel like this?
- Are you being punished ...or feel you are being punished for something you have done?
- Are you being watched... poisoned?
- Do you have voices telling you that you are bad ... or, deserve to be punished... or, should kill yourself / someone else?
- Do you have something physically wrong with you? Can you please explain your concerns to me? What evidence do you have?

## Response to Treatment

- ECT 80%
- Antidepressant and antipsychotic 80%
- Antipsychotic alone 33%
- Antidepressant alone 25%
- Placebo 5%