Situational Depression

by Dana Kendrick, Underwriter

Underwriting situational depression is challenging since it is not based on measurable facts and has the element of subjectivity with the presence or absence of symptoms. Underwriters and Medical Directors will sometimes debate the appropriate rating for an applicant with a stated diagnosis of situational depression especially in the absence of meaningful APS records.

In medical literature, situational depression is most properly referred to as an adjustment disorder with depressed mood. The risk is higher if one has undergone considerable stress during childhood, has existing mental health problems and has had difficult life circumstances occurring simultaneously. Depressed mood has been associated with increased mortality risk due primarily to suicide, cardiovascular disease and substance abuse. Situational depression can manifest and result in a diagnosis of major depressive disorder as long as the criteria for diagnosing major depressive disorder has been met while criteria for a more specific disorder, such as Bipolar disorder, has not been met.

Determining the onset should enhance the assessment process. Unrelated medical conditions can lead to situational depression and result in increased medical risks. Situational depression is usually categorized as short-term and occurs in the aftermath of various traumatic changes in your normal life, such as the loss of a job or death of a loved one. An individual with situational depression should not be assessed the same as a person with major depressive disorder. Underwriting depression can be viewed as somewhat subjective, where an underwriter’s own experience and views on mental illness could be incorporated into the overall risk assessment process. This is one reason underwriting is often referred to as both an art and a science.

An assessment can be considered correct if the underwriter adheres to the company’s philosophy, follows established risk classification principles and uses consistent judgment in the underwriting decision when assessing the risk class. It is also important for underwriters to monitor medical trends to keep up with diverse medical issues. New treatment options may be discovered in treating situational depression and that can potentially change the way the risk is assessed in someone with any type of depression.

Sources
2. https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3462815/

All Decisions

Top Rateable Impairments

The chart below shows the top five rateable impairments outside of standard/preferred in 2018.
The CBD Oil Rush!

By Al Autry
Senior Underwriting Consultant

Despite political divisions in Washington, a new Bipartisan Farm Bill was passed by Congress and signed by the President late last year. The bill includes provisions that will legalize hemp farming and products on a broader scale. As defined by the legislation, hemp cannot contain more than 0.3 percent THC. The new law does legalize the sale, possession and transport of hemp products with certain restrictions.

In summary, it appears the new Farm Bill will turn hemp into a mainstream crop. However, the new bill should also provide more oversight and regulation for the budding CBD industry.

Sources

FDA News

Diabetes Care

“The U.S. Food and Drug Administration today permitted marketing of the Tandem Diabetes Care t:Slim X2 insulin pump with interoperable technology (interoperable t:Slim X2) for delivering insulin under the skin for children and adults with diabetes. This new type of insulin pump, referred to as an alternate controller enabled (ACE) infusion pump, or ACE insulin pump, is the first interoperable pump, meaning it can be used with different components that make up diabetes therapy systems, allowing patients to tailor their diabetes management to their individual device preferences. Diabetes therapy systems may be comprised of an ACE insulin pump and other compatible medical devices, including automated insulin dosing (AID) systems, continuous glucose monitors (CGMs), blood glucose meters or other electronic devices used for diabetes management.”

www.fda.gov

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