

# Dr Beijing Newsletter

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## Seasonal Affective Disorder

Seasonal affective disorder (SAD), a type of depression, is a debilitating problem that interferes with the quality of life, especially during the autumn, winter and early spring

Clinical symptoms that reappear regularly with the seasonal changes include lethargy; difficulty concentrating; depression; negative thoughts; elevated cravings for carbohydrates with corresponding overeating and weight gain; Hypersomnia (excessive sleepiness); tiredness in the morning; diminished libido; Patients typically become more anxious by the end of the summer as they anticipate the coming months, during which less sunlight is present and their symptoms return. Some people may combine other mental problems, such as substantial abuse, personality disorders and anxiety. These disorders may cause severe illnesses such as cardiovascular and endocrine disease, for which a patient should seek qualified professional help.

SAD does, however, respond well to treatment of Traditional Chinese Medicine

When daylight is less, serotonin (which helps nerve cells cooperate and affects mood) level in the brain drops; the pineal gland secretes more melatonin(which puts a body to sleep). Together,both of them can trigger symptoms of SAD. In Chinese Medical theory, winter is the time of "Yin". Things are moving inward, daylight is declining, darkness is more dominant. The normal movement of life is slowing and declining. The " Yang" which is energetic, warming and outward moving aspects of people's body is decreased. These changes cause the SAD. Acupuncture can control the symptoms, along with Chinese herbal medicine, the lifestyle can be changed and improved. The effect of this treatment has been proven by The World Health Organization.