



For immediate release

Debunking Blue Monday

January 13, 2016

Calgary, AB – “Blue Monday,” this year, January 18th, is often believed to be the most depressing day of the year, but this is a myth. Since about 2005, the third Monday in January has been reported to be the day of the year that people feel most depressed. This correlates with another belief that the most suicides take place on this day.

If not on Blue Monday, when *do* most suicides occur? Believe it or not, the research tells us that the suicide rate peaks not in the cold, sometimes gloomy season of winter, but instead in spring and summer. Though it should be noted that this peak is very slight, and generally the rate is consistent throughout the whole year.

It’s easy to understand why the belief in Blue Monday persists, though, as after the holiday season people may be more in-debt than usual, they may be missing the family and friends they were able to reconnect with over the holidays, or they may have a difficult time adjusting to the return to work.

Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) is another explanation for why people may feel down in the month of January. According to Robert Olson, Librarian and Writer with the Centre for Suicide Prevention, “SAD is a combination of physical and emotional disturbances that include depression, and it generally occurs in the fall and winter.” The occurrence of SAD may be linked to higher rates of depression, but Olson tells us that even those affected by SAD experience their symptoms around 40% of the year, not just in January, and not just on the third Monday of that month.

Despite the prevalence of SAD around this time of year, and the other possible risk factors mentioned, the suicide rate does not increase in January, and the most incidents of depression do not manifest themselves on the third Monday of the month, either.

So where did the myth of Blue Monday come from? Blue Monday [originated as a public relations stunt](#) performed by a travel agency looking to increase trip sales in the month of January, and therefore has no founding in science whatsoever. The date, the third Monday of January, was calculated [based on a pseudoscientific equation](#) that supposedly took into account numerous mood variables.

Blue Monday may be a myth, but it is important to remember those that are feeling depressed and possibly suicidal at any time of the year. We know that the majority of those who are suicidal don't actually want to die, they just want the pain of living to stop. So if you are in crisis on Blue Monday, or any other day, please contact your local crisis centre; they can help. Or if you know someone who you think is suicidal, ask them directly, and check out our tips for speaking with someone you think may be at risk.

If you are feeling suicidal, or know someone who is, please contact the Distress Centre for help: 1-403-266-4357

Contact: Crystal Walker, Communications Coordinator - crystal@suicideinfo.ca or (403) 245-3900 ext. 229

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