

## Sad with grief--is it time to test to ease the pain?

**Life** events, especially the loss of those close to us, can sometimes be overwhelming. Individual responses to life challenges vary depending on personal coping skills and genetically predisposed brain chemistry. For some, a significant grief event may be the proverbial straw that breaks the camel's back, causing a spiral of negative feelings and depression that are difficult to remedy. A recent study conducted by the University of Arizona explored persons with complicated grief, a chronic condition with distinct symptoms including "persistent intense yearning and longing for the person who died, avoidance of reminders that the person is gone, deep relentless sadness, self-blame, bitterness, or anger in connection with the death, and an inability to gain satisfaction or joy through engaging in meaningful activities or relationships with significant others." The study looked at catecholamine levels before and after psychotherapeutic treatment and found a correlation between levels of epinephrine and severity of grief symptoms. The evidence did not indicate that the length of bereavement correlated with complicated grief scores.

The study concludes "that catecholamine levels are affected by bereavement, and in turn, can affect the ability of those with complicated grief to benefit from psychotherapy." Therefore, quantifying catecholamine levels can offer insight into the expectations of psychotherapy, and may indicate that treatment or modification of these neurotransmitter levels could augment traditional grief therapy. Individual baseline catecholamines (epinephrine, norepinephrine and dopamine) are easily measured in a single urine sample and amino acid therapies can be employed to balance or boost levels as appropriate, offering maximum benefit to grief patients who are likely also undergoing some psychotherapy.

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upcoming  
events below

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## Resources

- O'Connor MF, Shear MK, Fox R, Skritskaya N, Campbell B, Ghesquiere A, Glickman K. Catecholamine predictors of complicated grief treatment outcomes. *Int J Psychophysiol.* 2012 Oct 5.

For more information on supporting a healthy mood and neurotransmitter balancing, join us on Tuesday, October 30th for our next webinar: The science of emotion: how neurochemicals affect our moods. [Click here to register.](#)

## Upcoming events

**Labrix Advanced Workshop**  
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**The science of emotion: how neurochemicals affect our moods**  
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