

Healthwire News Release:

Researchers combine bright light with wake therapy to beat depression

San Diego, CA: Doctors have known for decades that sleep deprivation reversed the effects of depression, but for only a day or so. Now doctors can extend the anti-depressant effects of sleep deprivation (now called wake therapy*) by adding bright light treatments.

Researchers recently discovered that sleep deprivation was most effective during the *last half* of the sleep cycle, when the body clock is active. Since this appeared to be a body clock problem, bright light (10,000 lux intensity) was added each morning to reinforce the effect of sleep deprivation. As long as bright light was used each morning, the depression was halted.

How does this work?

The body clock plays an integral role with energy and hormone levels. With depression, it's possible that the body clock has shut down and needs to be 'rebooted' or jumpstarted with wake therapy and bright light. Whatever the reason, bright light has been found to be a major key in fighting depression.

*Since the patient can now sleep for the first half of the night, the term "wake therapy" is more appropriate.