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A Grounded Theory Study of Depression in a
Sample of Men Participating in a Clinical Trial
Examining the Effect of a Dietary Supplement on
Depression.

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for a degree of Master of Arts in psychology
at Massey University, Palmerston North.

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Abstract.

Male depression is one of the most misunderstood and under diagnosed disorders in psychology today. Recent research examining male depression has suggested that this misunderstanding is due to an over reliance on positivist research practices. In addition the application of homogenous theories of depression developed from research using predominantly female samples to understand depression in males has clouded the area. In light of this research there have been calls to examine masculine depression, by looking at the experiences of affected males, using a qualitative methodology. The primary objective of the present study was to conceptualise depression based on the experiences of affected males using a grounded theory methodology. The sample consisted of 31 New Zealand males participating in a 12-week, double blind, placebo controlled trial examining the effectiveness of dietary supplementation as an adjunct to usual therapy in the treatment of depression.

The basic social process emerging from the men's lived experience of depression involved participants developing a personal paradigm of depression. The development of this paradigm influenced the way the men understood and managed their depression. It evolved with the accumulation of experiential knowledge of their distress, which included experiencing the symptoms of depression, using personal coping strategies, experiencing the build up of depression, and receiving professional treatment. The implications of these findings for researchers and clinicians working in the area of male depression are discussed.

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This thesis is dedicated to
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